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A VISION.

BY E. E. REAFORD

Oh, I have had a vision!
I looked beyond the gateway of the City of the
Dead,
And I saw the hills Elysian,
And the spires of the mansions where the weary
are at rest.

Oh, beautiful, beautiful vision
Of the city so far away,
Of my home on the hills Elysian,
So far and far away!

Oh, the rapture that came o'er me,
When I heard the angels singing in that land
beyond the tide,
And I saw those gone before me,
And the light of Heaven's glory made their faces
glorified.

And I heard the golden viols
And the voices of the angels blend in sweetest
harmony,
And my heart forgot its trials
And was reaching out to Heaven on that tender
melody.

Oh, what peace and tender quiet
Wrapped the bright celestial city in a strange,
unearthly calm.
And my pulses all ran riot
As I looked at that sweet country with its at-
mosphere of balm.

Oh, that far-off, far-off country!
If it only could come nearer! but, ah me, I quite
forget!
I must turn my footsteps thither,
And perhaps along its pathway, I walk with
Jesus yet.

Bessie Raynor: THE FACTORY GIRL.

A TALE OF THE LAWRENCE LOOMS.

BY DR. WM. MASON TURNER.

AUTHOR OF "COLLEGE RIVALS," "MASKED MINER,"
"FIFTY THOUSAND REWARD," "THE MISSING
FINGER," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A FACE AT THE WINDOW.

"Bessie! Bessie! I say, Bessie, my
child!" and the old man's voice, as he turned
uneasily on the lowly bed, went out in a
pitiful wail.

"Here, father: I am here," and the frail
young girl, with a wan, haggard face, sud-
denly aroused from the little slumber into
which she had fallen, and, rising from her
chair, reeled, rather than walked, to the
couch of the sufferer.

At that instant the dim-lit room was
ablaze with a blinding flash of lightning,
which revealed every object, as if with the
splendor of the noonday sun. A moment,
and the crashing, jarring collapse of the air,
as the bolt came down, rattled the casement
and the rickety doors of old Silas Raynor's
humble house.

The girl started back, as she flung her
hands to her eyes to shut out the blinding
glare. Then she turned abruptly toward
the open window to let down the uplifted
sash.

But the old man saw her.
"Stop, Bessie," he said. "Let the air
come in, my child. I'll not need it much
longer. Let me have it. Do not fear the
lightning or the thunder; the gust will soon
pass over and God, who has watched over
us heretofore so well, will not let harm be-
fall us now. Ha!" he exclaimed, after a
slight pause, as again the red-winged light-
ning flared into the room, illumining every
nook and corner, and quickly followed by
the sharp, pealing stroke.

That lurid glare, blinding and more daz-
zling than the first, though it was but
momentary in its stay, showed a scene in
the humble apartment.

Bessie Raynor, startled and awe-struck,
her long auburn ringlets falling in disarray
down her back, her thin, frail figure, weak
and exhausted, staggering away before the
blinding stroke, her delicate, vein-marked
hands pressed over the lack-luster, tear-red
eyes, was a striking figure in that scene.

An old man, with gray locks scattered
over his aged head, with a weather-beaten,
iron-like, yet gentle face, his big gray eyes
glancing quietly above and around him, lay
upon the humble bed, with its poverty-
speaking appointments. Occasionally he
tremblingly raised his hand to his forehead
to wipe away the cold dew gathering there
so rapidly.

But, his right hand nor his right leg did
he move, and the muscles of the right side
of his face were fearfully contracted; the
deformity thus created about the mouth
and cheek was hideous.

This old man formed another figure in
this impressive scene.

His name was Silas Raynor—"Captain
Silas," as he was known in Lawrence, and
in Newburyport, and along the coast-
country. And for many a year he had been
known; for on this wild, gusty night in
August of the year 1839, this very day, he
had reached his sixty-fifth birthday.

Four days previous to this stormy summer
night of lightning and thunder, when, near
sunset, he was strolling leisurely over the
eastern bridge and listening to the loud
roar of the Merrimac, as its dark waters
thundered over the dam, thinking of his
gentle daughter, Bessie, and his crippled
boy, Ross, who were at work in the great
Pemberton mill, the clack and whirl of its
flying shuttles and spindles even then fall-
ing on his ear; thinking, too, of his long-
absent son, the sailor on the northern seas,
whose brown cheek and hardy brow were
facing the Arctic winds, the old man had
paused and staggered toward the low, red
parapet. A sudden faintness had crept
over him; then a sense of numbness had
crawled slowly, coldly, up from his feet and
settled in his strong brain. Then a dead-



A wild cry burst from Bessie's lips as she saw the wicked, sinister face of "Black Phil" at the open window.

ing tingling had flashed through his limbs,
and with a deep sigh he had tottered back-
ward from the parapet, and fallen upon the
boarded floor of the bridge.

When he had recovered his consciousness,
a great crowd of men and women, of boys
and girls, were gathered around him. The
factories had "let out" for the day's work
was done.

Old Silas was securely grasped in the
strong arms of Lorin Gray, the operative,
and, on either side, as he slowly reeled
along, supported by the mill-man, toward
his humble home in the narrow alley-way
near the canal, walked Bessie Raynor and
Ross, the cripple, weeping bitterly and
wringing their hands.

When the doctor, hastily summoned, had
come, only a cursory examination was suf-
ficient to make him shake his head and
whisper in Lorin Gray's ear that the end
was not far off.

Yet Silas Raynor was, bodily, the imper-
sonation of seeming health.

This, then, was the fourth night that
Bessie had sat up and watched by the bed-
side of her father, sleeping only at intervals
as he slept, always heeding his slightest cry
and driving away her tears to make him
think she was brave. Besides this, she did
not stop her loom in the mill, but all these
four days had worked half of the time,
regularly and steadily. Then she had hur-
ried home to attend to her father.

Ross, however, cripple though he was,
had not missed an hour from his daily toil.

The Raynors could not afford to lose an
hour even from work. "This true, it had
been hinted that the old captain could afford
to take his children out of the mill and re-
lieve them of the constant labor to which
they were subjected. It was hinted that he
certainly owned the house, a humble one,
truly, yet a house in which he lived. It
was hinted, too, that the old captain had, in
years ago, purchased some western prop-
erty in Illinois for a song; and then came
the strangest hint of all, that the old ex-
aminer, who had sailed in his youth in
foreign seas, had amassed money in queer,
outlandish gold.

That gold he had buried!

Yet, these were but hints; and those who
knew the old man discredited them, for
they were well aware of his love for his
children.

At all events, Bessie and her crippled
brother worked still, in the manner we have
stated, in the Pemberton Mill. If they
stopped for any cause, sickness or accident
included, their pay ceased until they report-
ed again for duty. The proprietor could
not afford to create a precedent of this sort!
Lorin Gray had come regularly to the
humble dwelling to inquire after the old
man. His visits had been made after his
work was over; he, too, could not leave the
mill. On his first visit, after the accident,
he had hesitatingly offered to remain all

night and let Bessie go to bed. But the girl,
with a blush—though she glanced gratefully
into the sad, handsome face of the young
man—had declined his offer, with thanks.

There was a relationship existing between
the two, of which both were aware, which
made Bessie decline Lorin Gray's offer. He
did not press it. But he came again the
next night, and, as he saw her worn, wan
look, her dim, sleepless eye, he again offer-
ed his services as watcher. But again Bes-
sie refused, and this time, though her tone
was decided and her words admitted of no
further reply, her blush was more marked.

As the second flash of lightning glared in
the room, Bessie uttered a shriek and reeled
toward a chair for support.

"Oh, father!" she cried, "it's dangerous!
You are in the draught! Let me close the
window, for—"

"No, no, my child," interrupted the old
man, speaking with difficulty, anxiety in his
tone. "I must intrust to you a secret, this
night."

"A secret, father?"

"Ay, my child, and this night, or never,
you must have it! Let the air come in. I
dread not the lightning-stroke; if it be the
Master's will that it should be thus, I care
not. I am going now, fast!"

"Oh, father! do not speak so. You will
recover, and—"

"No, my child, I know better. I can
read what the doctor thinks, in his eyes and
manner, and Lorin Gray would not deceive
me. He has not spoken a word of hope to
me yet. No, Bessie, build not up false
hopes. Before the mid-watch, old Silas
Raynor will have slipped his cable for-
ever!"

Bessie Raynor sunk into the chair, and,
burying her face in her hands, wept silent,
bitter tears. It was strange that the foun-
tains were not long since drained.

The old father turned his head with an
effort; his eyes fell upon his daughter. A
silver passed over his frame; he strove to
straighten, but the strong hand of palsy
held him back.

"Come, Bessie," at length he resumed,
speaking in a low tone, but hurriedly; "my
sands are running out with the speeding
hours. I must tell you the secret I referred
to. Justice to you, and an eye to your fu-
ture welfare and that of your brother, im-
pel me to speak; and the time has come.
Draw near, Bessie," and he beckoned his
daughter to him.

Unhesitatingly the girl arose from her
chair, wiped her eyes, and drew near the
bed.

"First, Bessie, search in the old locker at
the foot of the bed, and bring me the flask
you will find. It contains pure Santa Cruz
rum. I need it now, though I never used it.
It will build me up, until I can tell you
what I have to say."

The girl did as directed. In a few mo-

ments she had found the flask, and return-
ing to the bedside, placed it to the lips of
her father.

The old man drank greedily; then, lean-
ing back on the pillow, closed his eyes. For
a moment he lay thus; but, suddenly arous-
ing himself, he turned toward the girl, moti-
oning her to take a seat, and began to
speak.

Bessie quietly slid her hand into the
sweat-cold palm of her father, and leaning
her head on his elbow, waited for him to
proceed.

"I did not expect death so soon, my
child," he said. "Four days ago I was
strong and hearty, and counted on a dozen
years more of life, in which to look around
for my children. But death has come
sooner than I thought—ay, death, my child!
Had I known it, I would have provided for
you better; yet there is time. Listen, my
child."

"Ross, father, Ross. Had I not better
call him?" interrupted the girl, half arising.

"He sleeps just above, you know."

The old man hesitated; a shade of pain
came to his brow and a tear dimmed his
eye.

"No, no, Bessie," he said. "Poor boy!
he works hard. Let him sleep on. You
can call him when—when I have told you
all; for then I'll soon be gone."

Bessie seated herself again, and once more
sought with her own delicate fingers the
hard, horny hand of her father.

The old man returned her warm pres-
sure, and, summoning his energies, began:

"I must hurry, Bessie; my strength is
going again. Time nor—death will wait for
me. My daughter, we have been living here
in our little home for years—been living
happily, though surrounded, not exactly by
poverty, but by scanty comforts. You and
your brother have been compelled to work
in the mill and to toil day by day. Well,
my child, you will never lose anything by
learning to work; but, Bessie, my heart has
often bled for you, and more than once have
I been on the point of relieving you from
your hard work—taking you from the
mill."

"Relieving us, father? Taking us from
the mill? What mean you, father?" and
Bessie leaned over and looked anxiously,
curiously, at her father's distorted face.

The old man half-smiled at her eagerness,
yet his smile was one of pleasure.

"I mean, my dear Bessie," he said, in a
low tone, yet speaking distinctly, "that I
am able to take you from the mill, to dress
you in fine clothes, and send you to the first
schools in Massachusetts."

He paused.

The girl started back in amazement.

"You, you, father!" she exclaimed. "Oh!
then, why have you not done it? Why have
you kept us at the looms all this—"

"There, there, my child, do not distress
me more. My time is flying and I must

soon be thinking of other matters. You
must not misjudge me. I said I was able to
take you from the mill, and I spoke the
truth; but, my daughter, I have been ham-
pered with fear. I have gold, but I dared
not let you know it. I knew that it would
be of more use to you after I was gone than
while I was living. And I feared, too, that
curious eyes might be fastened on the gold
which my children should offer in trade.
Then I knew, too, there are some unscrupu-
lous ones in Lawrence, who would gladly
clutch at any pretext for suspicion and for
persecution."

The old man hesitated as he uttered the
last words with significance, and his eyes
rested upon his daughter's face.

Bessie Raynor saw his glance, and she
had noted his words and the emphasis he
had made. A shudder crept over her thin
frame, and she half-covered away.

"I understand you, father, and your
reasons for secrecy," she murmured; "I
fear the man; but, he is married, and I'll
appeal to the law to—"

"But he swears he is not married, and
the law is very slow at working sometimes,
for—"

At that instant, another flash lighted up
the room and the sashes rattled under the
vibration of the reverberating thunder.

Bessie and her father both involuntarily
turned their gaze toward the open window.
A wild cry burst from Bessie's lips as she
saw a stunted figure, with a wicked, sinister
face there.

"Black Phil!" she cried, and sunk for-
ward on the bed.

CHAPTER II.

GOLD AND STEEL.

Two hours before the occurrences as
given in the preceding chapter, on this same
sultry, gusty August night, the figure of a
man might have been seen hurrying along
Essex street.

Occasionally he cast his eyes aloft and
furtively scanned the threatening sky, and
noted the inky darkness in which the heav-
ens were hid. Then, he would redouble
his pace. He studiously kept to the side
on which the lamps were flared by the fit-
ful, moaning summer wind, blowing in
from the west; and, though the night was
black and gloomy, and though the air, de-
spite the rising gale, was hot and stifling,
he drew a wide-rimmed hat over his eyes,
and fastened his coat-collar well up around
his neck.

That man was Arthur Ames, of the firm
of Arlington & Ames, Brokers and Bankers,
doing business on Essex street.

A quarter of an hour before we see him
striding along Essex street, Arthur Ames
had received a brief note. The contents of
that note amounted to a summons. He was
obeying the mandate.

On he hurried, seldom looking behind

him, but, as we have said, occasionally timorously glancing at the ominous cloud-bank in the sky.

At last, at the intersection of a cross-street, he passed beneath a blazing lamp. The rays, which were flung wildly about in distorted flashes, fell on the old man's face and revealed it, pale, anxious and threatening.

Fifteen minutes from the time we first saw him, he passed before a low, solid, dingy-looking two-story house, the lower story embellished with a plate-glass window on either side of the narrow door. It seemed, indeed, that door had been sacrificed for windows, yet, this was a banking-house, and the owners might have had their reasons for the strained entrances.

Arthur Ames paused here and glanced around him. There were few pedestrians abroad this night; not a soul was in sight.

"Black Phil is in earnest!" muttered the banker, with a suppressed anathema, as he gazed furtively in every direction. "And I, so completely in his power! Fiends! why did I trust him!"

He paused and fumbled in his pocket, as if searching for something.

"But I'll not hesitate now!" he suddenly exclaimed, as if acting under an impulse. "If money will buy Black Phil, and carry him away, it shall be done! If not, a sudden thrust, or powder and ball, must and shall save me. I'll borrow the money from the bank, and Malcolm Arlington will be none the wiser."

He drew from his pocket a key and stepping back a few paces to a dark, solemn-looking door, which denoted the private entrance, inserted the key, cautiously, into the keyhole. There was a low, harsh rattling of the double bolts, a rapid shooting of bars, and the door opened.

A moment, and Arthur Ames had entered the dark passage and closed the door cautiously, yet securely, behind him.

Scarcely had he disappeared, before, as if from the shadows on the sidewalk, the figure of a tall man arose and slowly came into view. With a few deliberate strides he walked forward and paused at the private entrance to the banking-house.

A neighboring lamp on the opposite side of the street, at that instant, driven by the moaning wind, which crept along, flashed its beams brightly forth for a fleeting instant and illumined the face of the tall man who stood quietly by the side of the banking-house.

A singular face it was; hard, stern, calculating, brave, ambitious.

"I am armed, and it may be well that I am," Arthur Ames is a coward, afraid of his shadow, but, in such a matter as this, he may be desperate, for he holds every thing at stake! I would not have thought it. But now, my eyes are opened, and 'tis I, Arthur Ames, who hold you! At last you shall work for me!"

"Ah, Minerva! Minerva!" he continued, "I know you love me not, and that you do love the low-born Lorin Gray. Dream on, dream on; I'll not awaken you yet! I'll love and worship you, for you must be mine."

He drew out a key, flung open his coat, so that he could readily thrust his hand in the side-pocket, and softly opened the door.

At this same hour, a light gleamed from the window of a small cabin, nestled close on the bank of the river, down on the wasteland, below the machine-shops. It was an unpretending habitation, and stood all alone, and the light which flashed from the uncurtained window was small and unpretending, too; so faint, too, that its gleam did not penetrate many paces into the dark, glowing night-air outside. Within the room, in which the light shone—a mean, shabby-furnished room it was—sat a man, leaning his hands upon a low table. On the table stood a rude inkstand, open, and near by lay several sheets of coarsely-scratched and blurred paper. The lamp which flung out its rays was placed near the open window, and in front of the man upon whose face it shone.

That face was not one upon which the beholder would like to look twice.

The man's complexion was swarthy that, in the uncertain light, it seemed almost black. The head was massive, square and brutish, enormously large behind the ears and slanting over the low, wrinkled forehead. The brow was lowering with the matted masses of coarse red hair falling over it, even down to the eyes. Those eyes were small, piercing, sinister, and of an uncertain color, and they continually roved around restlessly beneath the shaggy brows, though the head was stationary. The lower part of the man's face was covered by a short, stunted beard of the same color as his hair, though the mustache did not conceal the large mouth with its thick, protruding lips, between which showed one or two brown, jagged, overhanging teeth.

The frame of this person corresponded in its mold to the beastly cast of features. It was short, brawny, and absolutely deformed and distorted by the giant muscles which worked the limbs. The spread of the shoulders was immense, made more so by an unsightly hump on the left side of the back.

One glance at his garb betrayed his calling. He was a mill operative.

He sat, quietly for some moments, gazing at the blurred sheets and around the room.

At that instant a dazzling flash of lightning blazed through the open casement. Then followed the thunder. The man sprung to his feet and started to rush from the apartment; but he stayed his steps.

"No, no!" he muttered. "I have sent him word to come, and I must wait for him. I'll strengthen myself, and then I'll not care for the lightning; and the cabin is low, too. Yes, I'll stay; for I want money, and I want to see Arthur Ames."

As he spoke, he turned and went to a large chest in the further corner of the room. He raised the lid, thrust in his hand, and drew out a black bottle, from which he took a long draught. Then, replacing the bottle, he returned to his seat near the window. Several moments elapsed, and he spoke not.

"Ha! ha!" he cried, "now I am strong. I care not for the elements now! I care not for the black shadows which haunt me; for the shade which lurks at my elbow; for the childish wall that continually comes up from old Merrimack! No, I care for nothing save gold, and for Bessie Raynor! That girl is in my mind all the time. By force or love, she shall be mine. Now, Nancy"—here his voice sunk and his eyes flashed toward a door which led into another room—"what of her?"

As he spoke, he arose. He cautiously approached the door, and bending his ear down, listened intently. But he heard nothing.

He crept softly over the floor, and paused

near an old-fashioned, low mantel-piece. He glanced toward the door again, and then, turning resolutely away, placed his hand on the wall, in a certain spot, and pressed heavily.

Slowly a concealed door opened, revealing a cavity of considerable depth. In that cavity lay quietly a large, glistening heap of gold.

The man gazed over it.

At that moment the door leading into the room from the other apartment slowly opened, and a woman protruded her head, and gave one glance at the scene.

One glance was enough. With a wild, startled, greedy look, she was about to spring in. But she controlled herself, and softly closed the door, without making the slightest sound.

"'Tis all right, all safe," he said. "But, we're going to have a gust. I wonder if old Arthur Ames will come, as I have ordered him to do? I wonder if he, too, is afraid of thunder and lightning, and sad, moaning winds, and sadder, wailing waters!"

It was hard to believe that such words, breathing refinement, ay, poetry itself, could fall from the coarse lips of such a looking person.

"If he fails to come to-night, it will be the first time he has braved me; yes, the first time, though over twenty years—long, dreary years—have rolled by since that night."

"Ha! what do you want, Nancy?" he asked, as at that moment the door behind him opened, and turning, he saw the woman he have noted before, standing in the room, gazing at him.

A singular looking woman she was. She, too, was clad as an operative in the mills. Her dress was coarse. Her mass of then disordered hair, profusely sprinkled with gray, fell down her back. Her face was ruddy, as if she was acquainted with the bottle, however well concealed it was, which the man had drawn from the chest; yet about it, particularly on the brow, and around the eyes and mouth, there were hard, stern, deep-lined lines, indicating trouble, care and sorrow.

She did not reply to the man's question, but stood, looking intently at him.

"I say, Nancy Hurd, what do you want, and why don't you go to bed? I thought you were asleep!" he growled.

"Nancy Hurd, is it? and why not Nancy Walshe?" snapped back the woman, slamming the door to, and striding like an Amazon into the room, her basilisk eyes glittering like balls of fire.

"You are not Nancy Walshe," sneered the man; and he laughed a wicked, mocking laugh. "And I've told you so before to-night."

The woman didn't move. She had caught the baleful glare of his eyes, and she was somewhat awed. Another expression crept into her face, and she said, in a low voice:

"I know you have told me so, Phil; but, then, I had hoped you was trying to prove me."

"To prove you! Bah! I tell you, that for fifteen years I have allowed you to live with me, but we are not married; the ceremony wasn't a genuine one. Why can't you believe me, and be quiet and reasonable, when I tell you, you are not my wife?"

These words were spoken with the utmost coolness, and the man half turned away from her.

A terrible shudder swept over the woman's face as she listened. But still, the tempest which was howling in her bosom, and which she had once subdued, did not break forth. She controlled herself.

"'Tis hard, Phil," she said, in the same low tone, "to hear you talk so to me. I have always been true to you, and I thought I was your wife. I was deceived, Phil."

"Then, 'tis time you were undeceived, for I swear to you, that we were married by a false ceremony, and you know we were both drunk then."

The woman uttered not a word, but turned to go.

The man saw the movement. He stopped her.

"I had just as well be plain with you, Nancy Hurd," he said, and his voice was stern and positive. "You can remain here for awhile, but when I marry the woman I love, you must go."

Nancy turned like lightning.

"The woman you love! Who is she, man?"

"You know her well enough; 'tis needless to ask. I love—Bessie Raynor."

Though the man's words were bold, yet he sunk his eyes and turned his head away. "Bessie Raynor! ay, a child of seventeen."

"She is old enough to be my wife."

"She is young enough to be your oldest daughter. And she hates you, despises you!"

"What care I for that, so I can get her for my wife?"

The woman paused; her eyes were now flashing fire; her Amazon breast was rising and falling, tumultuously; her fingers were twitching nervously.

Suddenly she strode up to the man, and laying her hand upon his shoulder, she hissed:

"I am your lawful wife, Phil Walshe; and I tell you, yes, I swear to you, that sooner than you shall marry Bessie Raynor, I will cut your throat, or I'll tear her heart out! Do you understand me?"

The man covered for a moment under those bold words, and shrunk away from the grip of the woman. But, he soon recovered himself, and suddenly rising to his feet, he snatched a knife from his bosom and darted upon her. She turned to flee, but his strong hand clutched her and hurled her against the wall.

She turned like a tigress at bay, and her hand rapidly delved down into the folds of her dress. A moment, and a knife, too, flashed in her hands.

"Stand back, Phil!" she hissed. "God knows I have loved you faithfully. But, I am strong, and I am armed. I'll not be murdered in cold blood. Stand back, I say!" and she brandished her knife aloft.

But the man still pressed on.

(To be continued.)

Beecher's Warning to his Congregation.—Beware of refined selfishness. Beware of aesthetic selfishness. Beware of aristocratic selfishness. Beware of the selfishness of prosperity and of respectability. Beware of the temptation of the devil. Beware of any thing that shall make you indifferent to the sufferings and to the condition of those who are cast down by reason of their sins—for you, in your estate, are sinners, dependent, every hour and every moment, on the goodness of a pitying God. Be you to your fellows what God is to you.

HIDDEN THINGS.

BY G. G. POSTER.

HIDDEN gems are in the sea,
And hidden music in the air;
Beauty which we cannot see
Thrills around us everywhere.
Hidden thoughts, how bright, how many
Break like bubbles in the sun;
Where the stream, unseen of any,
Under wild flowers doth run.
Hidden loves and hidden dreamings,
Treasures never brought to light,
Live and vanish like gleaming
Of bright meteors in the night.
Hidden faith and hidden worship,
Oh, how strong and pure and deep!
Swirl and flow like secret fountains,
Where the wild birds dream and sleep.
Why are these, if not to tell us
That these broken links unite,
In a chain forever sparkling—
In Eternity's broad light?
Oh, how dreary and dreary
Would this world of sorrow be,
God! if there had never whispered
That it is the path to Thee.

Love-Blind:

OR,

WAS SHE GUILTY?

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL.

AUTHOR OF "OATH-BOUND," "SHADOWED HEART," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XII.

THE VOW UNDER THE COFFIN.

The day Mr. Clavering had appointed for his wedding was selected for the funeral services.

It was deliciously clear and cool; the sun never had shone so brightly, it seemed to Lillian Rothermel, or the breeze to blow so refreshingly as on that day, when, instead of proudly walking by his side up the wide aisle of Fernleigh church, she crept along behind him, in trailing mourning robes, and he being carried in headmost!

That was a grief-stricken day to the family and guests at Fernleigh; and while they all bewailed the loss of Mr. Clavering, each was most tender in their sympathy for poor, stricken Lillian, whose low, plaintive sob filled the small parish church during the service, whose utter abandonment of grief, when she kissed her dead betrothed a last good-by—it was the first kiss she ever had, unsolicited, given him—was pitiful, even in the eyes of men unused to weep.

Every one acknowledged what a blow it must be to her; people who, when they had received her wedding invitations, had sneered and called her an ambitious woman, to have so completely gotten the best of old Mr. Clavering and Fernleigh, now shook their heads and thought how mistaken they had been in accusing her of marrying for money, when it was all for love, after all!

All but Harry Gordeloup; he sat with the friends, just beside Mr. Alvanley, and where he could see Winnie St. Cyr's bowed head and shivering form—if he had but known it was not for grief for the dead, but worse than anguish for the living, that sent those blood-curdling tremors through her veins!

But he didn't know; and it was very natural in him to attribute her emotion to the loss of such a friend as Edward Clavering had been to Winnie, and her mother before her.

So he sat there, grimly upright, yet with a certain grayness in his face that had never left it since Lester Alvanley had awakened him that fatal morning with the news. He was nervous, and he didn't attempt to deny it, either to himself or others; but the thought of what was, Lillian was free, and an heiress, although she did not know that yet, of course.

He thought a great deal of Winnie, in between thoughts of Lillian; Winnie must despise him, he supposed, because he had been used so contemptuously by Lillian; yet, for all, he imagined there had been a vestige of the old-time affection left in her, else why her emotion that morning?

Very little of the eulogy did he hear; and not till the strangers and acquaintances had looked upon Mr. Clavering for the last time, and it remained for the party from Fernleigh to pay their sad tribute, did he fully arouse from his reverie.

Miss Amy and Mr. Alvanley had passed on toward the door; so that he, Winnie and Lillian were together, alone, by the coffin. He did not like to look at dead people—it is a constitutional peculiarity with some persons—so, bestowing a hasty glance, and seeing more of Winnie St. Cyr's blanched face and wide eyes than Mr. Clavering's, he would have hurried on. But Lillian laid her black-kid hand heavily on his arm.

"Wait only a moment, and you, Miss St. Cyr, to listen to the vow I make, in the solemn presence of death, and may the departed spirit of my betrothed husband hear my sworn vow—never to consider my earthly mission complete, until I have avenged his death! From his open coffin I go forth; my task is not so hard, for I have my suspicions!"

She fixed her eyes for a second on Harry Gordeloup's face, that, despite the occasion, flushed under the gaze once so dear to him; and Winnie, with a wild gesture of her hands, turned to go, meeting as she did Lillian Rothermel's black eyes, as sternly as Harry had.

Lillian had attracted no attention; her voice had been low and terribly impressive; but to Winnie she had seemed like some onswEEPING Nemesis, speaking with thunderous voice.

The three walked down the aisle; Lillian entered the carriage with Miss Amy and Winnie; Harry and Mr. Alvanley occupying the next.

CHAPTER XIII.

HARRY'S CONGRATULATION.

At Fernleigh, when the party returned, dinner was spread; afterward, they gathered in the library, where the will was to be read.

After the usual preliminaries, the legacies were announced.

To Miss Amy a generous income; to Winnie St. Cyr, five thousand dollars; to Harry Gordeloup and Lester Alvanley each three thousand dollars for their duties as executors.

To the servants, each a thoughtful remembrance; to a charitable institute, the proceeds of the sale of certain real estate.

And then—with clear, high, slowly enunciated voice, Lawyer Margrave read:

"And to Miss Lillian Rothermel, who has this day promised to be my wife, I leave the

sum of five thousand dollars yearly, and the use of my town house and appurtenances so long as she lives; if, under any peculiar circumstances, I fail to keep my agreement.

"In event of our marriage, she will receive all the residue of my property, which, otherwise, will be disposed of as follows," etc., etc.

A silence, gendered by surprise, succeeded this announcement; and then, rising slowly to her feet, Lillian stared at the lawyer.

"For me—for me? Are you not mistaken? Surely I had no idea—I do not deserve this!"

The tears rushed to her eyes, and her lips quivered; and there were few present who did not remark afterward: "What a charming woman she was; how nobly she acted, yet with such a sorrowful humility of demeanor."

Then she glided around to Miss Amy Clavering, and leaned her head on her shoulder.

"I would have been so content to have remained in the old way; Miss Amy, I dare not accept this, dearly as I loved him. I feel I am an intruder—a robber; robbing you of your rights."

Was it any wonder Edward Clavering had loved her? so noble and womanly and high principled?

Miss Amy impulsively kissed the beautiful, upturned face, with its dewy lips and moist eyes.

"Take it, and be my own darling, as I know you were his; my younger sister, who will cherish me and care for me, now I am growing old."

So Lillian bowed to her destiny; a sweet, sad smile on her face as she walked gracefully back to her seat: a wild sense of exultant freedom in her soul that was laughing at its triumph!

There was little else to do after this; first came the congratulations of the lawyers, who felt it a great pleasure to take Miss Rothermel's warm, nestling hand, and tell her her good luck was nothing, in comparison with Mr. Clavering's loss, in being taken from so charming a prospect; then the friends, Winnie and Mr. Alvanley, until, standing like some elon-clad statue, yet so gloriously radiant was she in the pink flush of health and youth, she was left alone with Mr. Gordeloup.

The servants had thrown open the western windows, and a narrow spear of molten sunshine slanted across her purple-black hair, and lying a band of beauty, over her white throat and down her breast—until, hindered by the cross of a gothic-backed chair that stood just before her, the sunbeam stopped, as it were, unwilling to go further; and the place where it paused was on her breast—just where the blood-red spot had marked Mr. Clavering's doom. She shivered, and moved out of the light, then looked up to see Harry Gordeloup standing, with folded arms, and sternly-set lips, directly before her.

She never moved a muscle of her glorious face; not a tremor of the eyelids, not a hurried heaving of her bosom; but she met him face to face, alone, for the first time since the day she had seen him, in this very room, when she was on her way to tell the other she would be his wife, with as calm a glance as though it had been Mr. Alvanley, or any other acquaintance.

"Well!" he said, at length, never moving his gaze from her face.

"You think it is well, then, Mr. Gordeloup?"

He smiled at her; not the sort of smile she liked.

"You do not? I was mistaken; pardon me. I supposed since you had received your price—"

"Be still!"

She stamped her foot, and a red spot gathered on her cheeks.

"Why should I be still?" he went on, unheeding her wrath. "Once I asked you to have mercy on me, and you would not; now I must be still; forsooth, because I remind you that you are a rich woman after all, and yet not Edward Clavering's wife."

He was so strange, so heartless; Lillian, with all her wrath, could see that, and she wondered whether, after all—

"Will you congratulate me? I will forgive you if you do."

She had dropped her anger, and extended her hand in her olden, winking way, looking into his eyes so earnestly.

"Congratulate you? that you have your money? and that Mr. Clavering is dead? The former, certainly."

And he walked out, never as much as noticing her hand that was still extended.

She drew a long, gasping breath, and went slowly up-stairs.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE NET.

It seemed the easiest of all things for Lillian Rothermel to glide into the position of mistress of Fernleigh; Miss Amy, fond and clinging, preferred that she should do her own will, and the servants, proud of her beauty and grace, obeyed her wishes to the letter.

The week after the funeral the house was opened and aired; Lillian assumed her position behind the coffee-urn, and the new life at Fernleigh seemed to be inaugurated without an effort.

Harry Gordeloup had gone back to his business; and without a word of adieu to any one, Winnie, now that the Forestans were still at the White Mountains, was obliged to stay; and the visit was the more agreeable because Lester Alvanley had left Fernleigh.

Not that he went to remain away; Lillian had taken good care of that, and had told him, at parting, of Mr. Clavering's wish; promising, herself, the dower to Winnie, out of her own abundance, that Mr. Clavering would have given her.

Naturally, Lester Alvanley was delighted. He loved Winnie, and intended to use all his powers of persuasion until she consented; perhaps it occurred to him, if she could not be prevailed upon, she might be taught there was no alternative.

I said Lester Alvanley really loved Winnie St. Cyr; yet it was a thoroughly selfish love he bore her, for he was a thoroughly selfish man. Not that he would ever have permitted Winnie, through his inattention or neglect, to be an unhappy wife; yet he would use means to make her his wife that, in themselves, might distress her greatly.

So he bade her adieu at Fernleigh, not telling her he was to be Miss Rothermel's guest every Sunday during the season, and not so much as whispering a word of love to her.

He had noticed the marked difference in her manner, as well as personal appearance, those last dreadful days; he had seen the sudden nervous starting—the restless, preoccupied air, and the quick palings and flushings if one entered the room abruptly.

While Harry Gordeloup had remained at Fernleigh, Winnie had kept her room, where Lillian often sat with her.

Afterward, she came down-stairs oftener, and seemed less agitated, although a troubled, settled sorrow seemed to enwrap her in a gloom of unspeakable density.

The days passed very quietly at Fernleigh; Miss Amy keeping her room nearly all the time; Winnie and Lillian walking while the days were pleasant, and reading when indoors. No guests were invited save Mr. Alvanley, and the calls of condolence were soon made. The opportunity had not yet, in Miss Rothermel's opinion, arrived when she decided it was best to have a plain understanding with Winnie regarding Lester Alvanley. So far as Lillian herself was concerned in Winnie's later life, in connection with the affairs of Harry Gordeloup, there never had been the first word spoken, except that remark and its beseeching answer, on the day of Winnie's arrival.

Now, Lillian astutely judged that, by opening the conversation with Harry, and Harry's love affairs as concerning them both, she could get very near Winnie's heart.

It was perfectly well known to Lillian Rothermel that Winnie still loved Harry, despite his treatment of her. Lillian knew she had no idea of loving Mr. Alvanley, and therefore she knew her task was no easy one.

But she had determined that Harry should not marry Winnie; that Lester Alvanley should; and with a sort of defiant smile on her lips, she went down from her room into the bright, breezy parlor, where she knew she should find her.

Winnie was sitting in the oriel window, a piece of gay worsted work lying idly in her fingers, and her eyes gazing far out over the broad stretch of sunny woodland and meadows. There was the same restlessness in her eyes that had come there that never-to-be-forgotten day; the same pale look under the eyes, and around the mouth, that Lester Alvanley had seen.

She smiled, however, when Lillian drew a low rocking-chair opposite her.

"I came down purposely for a nice confidential talk, Winnie. I don't have any one to converse with but you nowadays."

There was a touch of quiet sadness in Lillian's tones that made Winnie's heart go out to her.

"And I'm sure there is no one who so cordially sympathizes with you, Lillian."

"Because you knew Mr. Clavering so well, or—pardon me, Winnie, because we both knew Harry Gordeloup so well?"

A dull gray color slowly gathered on Winnie's cheek; her face dreaded to talk about him; what fearful memories rose up at the sound of his name!

"Because, Winnie," Lillian went on, in a sweet, deprecating voice, "I know I never deserve to be pitied by you, unless I am first sure you have forgiven me. Sometimes I wonder how I could be so cruel."

"It was for the best, perhaps," Winnie felt constrained to make some sort of answer, but she hardly knew what she was saying.

"No, it was not. It was a wicked wrong I did you, Winnie, but it has all come back to me, and you, Winnie, can marry Harry and be happy."

She made the venture, watching its effects from under her drooping eyelids.

"Marry Harry Gordeloup! never, if I could—"

She had almost screamed out the words, and there came a light in her blue eyes as she thought of him. Then she hesitated, and, with the silence, came a dull, horrid agony around her heart.

"No? Forgive me if I wounded you. I might have known you were a woman in heart, if a girl in years. And a woman never takes back a lover who has trampled on her."

Oh! what knife-blades were those words of hers; so deliberate and cruel. They were true, too, Winnie knew; Harry Gordeloup had trampled on her, and Heaven help her, she would have taken him back with open arms, and forgiven and forgotten every thing, were it not that she believed him to be guilty of a far worse sin.

"Winnie, shall you go back to the Forestans?"</

He had remained standing before her, his eyes steadily regarding her varying features. Then, when he had paused, she answered, suddenly, vehemently:

"No! no! Mr. Alvanley, it can never be under any circumstances."

She rose up to go out of the room, but he caught her by her arm.

"Think of it, Winnie—for Harry's sake!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 71.)

Overland Kit:

THE IDYL OF WHITE PINE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

CHAPTER XVI.

PATRICK GWYNE APPEARS.

A LOW cry of alarm came from Bernice's lips as she beheld the masked man standing within her room.

"Don't fear; I ain't a-goin' to harm you," said the outlaw, gruffly, his voice hard and unnatural.

Bernice made a single step toward him as the tone of his voice fell upon her ears.

Her lips were parted as though a question trembled upon them, and there was an eager and an anxious look upon her beautiful face.

The road-agent guessed the question that was on Bernice's tongue.

"You know me, eh?" he said, with a hoarse chuckle.

"I—I think I do," the girl replied, slowly, a puzzled expression upon her face.

"Oh! you know me, fast enough, and I know you, too," Bernice Gwyne. I knew you the moment I set eyes on you in the coach, the other night, although it's ten years since I've seen your face."

"Ten years?" said Bernice, very slowly, speaking as if she were in a dream, and her eyes fixed steadily upon the outlaw.

"Yes, it's ten years since I 'levanted' from old Gotham and found a home in the Far West. I've changed a heap since that time; the smooth-faced boy has become the bearded man, the hand, that once only struck in self-defense, is now raised against all."

"And who are you?" cried Bernice, suddenly, the girl standing rigid as a statue, and staring with straining eyes upon her strange visitor.

"What do you ask that question for, when you must know who I am?" demanded the outlaw, coarsely.

"Answer it, please," replied Bernice, quietly, but with a suppressed agitation in her face that was painful to behold.

"You know well enough. What man is there in this hyer rancho likely to call you by name, the moment he sets his eyes on you, like I did, when I put my head in at the coach window? Who is it that you've come all the way from the East to find, eh?" the outlaw asked.

"Patrick Gwyne," she replied.

"Take a good look at me; I'm the man," said the road-agent.

"You, Patrick Gwyne?" Bernice questioned, slowly.

"Yes, you know I am, when you look upon me and hear my voice, you know that I am Patrick Gwyne, although you have tried to cheat yourself into a belief that you have discovered Patrick Gwyne in this blackleg, Dick Talbot."

"How do you know that?" demanded Bernice, quickly.

"Because I overheard all that passed between you and him up in the ravine to-day," replied the outlaw, with a laugh.

Bernice started as though she had been bitten by a serpent.

"It's true," added Kit, noticing the movement of the girl. "I was snuggled down among the pines; you see, I have to be pretty careful how I walk round this hyer town. You happened to meet this fellow not ten paces from my hiding-place, so I heard all that passed between you. I could hear though I couldn't see, but for all that, I saw something without the use of my eyes, that he didn't see with the use of his."

"And what was that?" asked Bernice, a peculiar expression upon her face.

"That Bernice Gwyne, if she stays in Spur City long, will be very apt to make a fool of herself," replied Kit, bluntly.

"You think so?"

"I know so," he said, decidedly. "Why, Bernice, I know you of old. The free and open-hearted child has not changed, although she has grown to womanhood; her nature is still the same. But, you're on the wrong track, my girl; switch off; say good-bye to this region and get back East as fast as possible."

"And leave you, Patrick Gwyne, to lead this life?" questioned Bernice.

"What other is open to me?" said Kit, doggedly.

"The life of an honest man; you are young yet; the best years of your life are still before you!" exclaimed Bernice, earnestly.

"Too late!" said the outlaw, with a shake of the head.

"It is never too late to forsake the ways of evil!" replied the girl.

"Oh, there's no use talking; leave me alone; you can't help me any. Go East and forget that such a man as Patrick Gwyne ever existed!" he exclaimed.

"Patrick, do you know what has happened at home?" she asked, quietly, but with a world of feeling in her tone.

"Yes."

"Yes—the father forgot that he had a son; well, the son once forgot that he had a father; both are even. Perhaps if the father had been more of an Irishman and less a Roman, the son would not have disgraced his gray hairs."

"How can you speak so, Patrick?" exclaimed Bernice, softly, her large eyes filling with tears.

"It is the truth," the outlaw replied, stubbornly. "My father had read that the Roman, Brutus, gave his son to death; his country first, his kindred after; my father spared the Roman and would have given me to the scaffold had I not found safety in flight. Years came and went, yet he did not relent; the foolish boy, that a kind word perhaps might have saved from evil, became a desperate man. When my father was on his deathbed, even he did not relent."

"How do you know?"

"I guessed it."

"You did not guess rightly," Bernice said, softly. "Your father's illness lasted only a few hours; the shock came so sudden that it gave him no time to undo the wrong that he had committed in his will; but yet, the last word upon his lips was your name."

name, in his dying hour he thought of the son whose name he had forbidden all to speak.

The teeth of the outlaw were tightly compressed, and his muscular frame shook with strong emotion.

"Will you not, then, leave this dreadful life and seek once more the path of honesty?" Bernice asked, earnestly.

For a moment the road-agent did not reply; then, with a great effort, he recovered his composure.

"Enough of that," he said. "I have already given you my answer, and now give me yours. Will you leave this place and return to the East?"

"No."

"You will not!" exclaimed Kit, harshly.

"No," replied Bernice, firmly.

"So I will not!" demanded the outlaw, evidently annoyed. "You have found what you seek. I am Patrick Gwyne. You do not doubt that, do you?"

"No," Bernice replied.

"You came to the West to find me; you have found me. That ends your mission. What can keep you here?"

"Can't you guess?"

"No."

"And yet you say that you overheard the interview between myself and this Mr. Talbot, to-day."

"And I did, every word; if you doubt it, I'll repeat the conversation."

"No, I do not doubt it," Bernice replied.

"You also said that you, without eyes, discovered something which escaped his vision."

"Yes, I did."

"And you ask why I remain here?"

Kit looked at the girl for a moment in silence; wonder expressed itself in his dark eyes.

"You love this man?" he cried, suddenly.

"I do," Bernice replied, firmly and proudly.

"Girl, you are mad!" cried the road-agent, roughly.

"Do you think so because I love this man, who calls himself Talbot, and because I am not ashamed to confess to you, my cousin, Patrick Gwyne, that I do love him?" the girl said, the peculiar look again appearing on her face.

"You love this fellow, this Injun Dick, a bully, gambler, cheat of the first water? A scoundrel that the Vigilantes will string up to the branch of a tall pine some fine morning as a warning to the rest of his cut-throat tribe?" cried Kit, hastily, and with bitter indignation.

"Yes, I love him," replied Bernice, proudly, "and that love shall win him from the mire of evil and make an honest man of him once again." As she spoke, the color flushed her cheeks and a bright, joyous light sparkled in her eyes.

"Oh, girl, you will lose yourself and not save him," cried Kit; "the task is impossible. Besides, he loves another woman—the girl, Jinny, who keeps this place. She saved his life once; that life belongs to her. Leave him to his fate."

"Patrick Gwyne, why do you attempt to deceive me?" cried the girl, suddenly.

"You are playing a bold game, but already I guess it. I know you, despite your disguise. You can not blind my eyes. You and Injun Dick are."

"Hush!" cried Kit, quickly, extending his hand in warning. "There is some one in the entry!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS AGAIN.

BERNICE obeyed the warning and kept silent.

The quick ears of the outlaw had not deceived him. There was some one moving in the entry outside. Some one moving cautiously.

"They're after me, I think," said the outlaw, cooly.

"After you?" exclaimed the girl.

"Yes, I shall have to run for it, maybe."

The noise in the entry increased; the one man there was joined by a dozen others, judging from the noise they made.

"I'm in a trap, sure," muttered Kit, listening, anxiously.

He's somewhere in the house now, you bet," exclaimed a hoarse voice outside.

"Joe Rein, by heaven!" cried Kit, grinding his teeth together in anger. He had recognized the voice of his former follower.

"Let a number keep watch below, while the rest search the rooms," said the stern voice of Judge Jones. He was evidently on the landing outside.

"So, wolves and dogs, all on my trail," muttered the road-agent, an angry menace in his tone.

"If they discover you?"

"They'll string me up to the first tree that comes handy," replied Kit, guessing the half-asked question.

"Is there no way by which you can escape?" Bernice asked, anxiously.

"Yes; open the window, slowly and carefully; look out and see if there is anybody down in front of the saloon," the outlaw said, quickly, his ready wit coming to his aid.

Bernice opened the window.

"Well?" questioned Kit, anxiously.

"There are two or three standing in the doorway," she replied.

"Put there of course to watch that I don't jump out of some of the windows," muttered the road-agent, in anger. "I'm in a trap; this visit to you, Bernice, may cost me my life."

"Why not remove your disguise? They do not suspect that the outlaw is daily in their midst," Bernice said.

"Disguise!" cried Kit, in wonder. "What mad notion have you got into your head?"

"With a violent kick, one of the men in the entry forced open the door. The entry was filled with men, some of whom bore candles.

With the speed of the lightning's flash, the road-agent drew his revolver and fired into the crowd.

Howling in terror, the miners tumbled over each other in their anxiety to escape from the range of the bullets of the outlaw. The candles were extinguished and confusion reigned supreme. None of the pursuers were injured, though, by the fire of the road-agent, purposely he had aimed over their heads.

With a second movement, as quick as the first, Kit brushed the candle off the little table and extinguished it. Then, with a bound, he vaulted upon the window-sill and leaped lightly to the ground.

As he had anticipated, the noise of the fire-arms had attracted the knot at the door into the house.

The coast was clear for the escape of the desperado, but the pursuers were close behind.

Kit ran up the street at a terrific burst of speed. The miners poured, tumultuously, from the house and followed in the chase. Thanks to the confusion attending the discharging of Kit's revolver, he had managed to secure an excellent start.

As the miners followed in pursuit, they opened a running fire from their pistols upon the fugitive; but, the night was dark, the moon being partially obscured by clouds, and the aim of the miners uncertain; so the road-agent really stood but little chance of being hit.

Judge Jones was not with the crowd of pursuers, although he had led the mob in the hotel. The miners did not notice his absence, so absorbed were they in their human chase.

After running up the street a few hundred yards, Kit darted suddenly to the left. Under a low, tumble-down shed stood a horse. It was the famous steed of the road-agent, the brown mare with four white stockings and a bright blaze in the forehead.

With a bound, Kit swung himself into the saddle. Up the street, at racing speed, went the horse.

Enraged at the new certain escape of their prey, the miners emptied their revolvers at the flying steed and rider.

Kit turned and laughed in defiance, waving his hand in bravado as he rode on.

A few moments more and the outlaw disappeared in the gloom of the darkness.

Disturbed and breathless, the pursuers returned slowly from their fruitless chase. In front of the Eldorado they found Judge Jones and Joe Rein, busy in conversation.

"He was too much for us, Judge!" exclaimed Ginger Bill, the driver, who had been one of the foremost in the pursuit.

"Run away from you, eh?" asked the Judge, in his usually calm manner.

"Had his horse down under a shed corralled, an' he jest got up an' got like a tarmal arthquake!" exclaimed Bill.

"Never mind, we'll have him before morning," said the Judge.

"Well, you may," replied Bill, doubtfully; "but, if he shows his nose hyer fur a week, he's a bigger fool than I take him to be."

"This lucky escape will render him careless. Bill, I want about four good men to go with me," said the Judge.

"What for, Judge?"

"To make an arrest."

"I'm your meat, for one!" cried Bill.

"Put me down for van!" exclaimed the Irishman, Patsy, who was one of the crowd.

Two more of the crowd volunteered, and so the party was made up.

Headed by Judge Jones, and accompanied by Joe Rein, the little party proceeded up the road, heading toward Gopher Gulley.

Many were the quiet remarks among the rank and file of the party as to the object of the expedition. But, as Judge Jones had some time before the opening of our story been formally elected Mayor of Spur City, no one thought of questioning his orders, or of asking information regarding them.

On through the darkness of the night trudged the little party. Spur City was left behind, and the rocky defile, northward, entered.

The defile ended, and the little creek that tumbled into the Reese crossed, the party saw before them the flickering lights that marked the location of the little mining camp, known as Gopher Gulley.

Two houses and some twenty tents, and tents and houses combined, made up Gopher Gulley.

The largest shanty, of course, was the saloon, which was dignified by the title of Cosmopolitan Hotel.

When the little official party from Spur City entered the Cosmopolitan, a quiet game of poker was going on in one corner. One of the players was Injun Dick; another, the giant who rejoiced in the appellation of Dandy Jim, the man-from-Red-Dog; three other rough-looking fellows made up the party.

Talbot nodded familiarly to Bill, said "good-evening" to the Judge, when the party entered, and then picked up the hand that had just been dealt him.

From the size of the little pile of coin before Dick, it was evident that he had not been winning.

"What brings you up our way, Judge?" asked the landlord of the Cosmopolitan, a huge-bearded giant of a fellow, with a round, good-natured face.

"A little business, that's all," replied the Judge, blandly. "Mr. Talbot," and he addressed the card-player.

"Eh, did you speak to me, Judge? I'll see that, and go ten better." This addressed to the card-players.

"I'm very sorry to disturb you, but—" and the Judge hesitated.

"What is it? Spit it out, Judge! Do you call me?" to the Red-Dogite, referring to the game.

"Not by a darned sight, till you get all your pile up," replied Jim, confidently.

"I shall have to trouble you to come with us," said the Judge.

All within the room, except Joe Rein, stared at the Judge in astonishment. Those who had accompanied him from Spur City were fully as amazed as the others.

"You want me?—what for?" asked Dick, astonished.

"You are my prisoner, sir," said the Judge, in a tone which showed plainly that he was in earnest.

"Your prisoner?" exclaimed Talbot, amazed.

"Yes; you must accompany us to Spur City."

"Of what am I accused?"

"That you will soon learn; your trial will commence at once."

"Say, Dick!" cried Jim, springing to his feet, "jest you say the word, an' I'll clean out the whole kerboodle. I'm a gray old mustang, I am, an' I chaw up a man a week—injuns ain't counted!" and the man-from-Red-Dog squared himself scientifically, and prepared to "go for" the Spur-Cityites.

"No, no!" cried Dick, quickly, laying down his hand and gathering up the few pieces of silver that remained to him; "don't kick up any fuss on my account. I'm ready to go with you, gents;" and then he muttered in an undertone, as he rose:

"I might have guessed this: I've got the queen of hearts in my hand again."

CHAPTER XVIII.

FACE TO FACE.

BERNICE, from the open window, watched eagerly the flight of the outlaw.

Of course all Spur City had been alarmed at the noise of the firing, and the street was well lined with men, women—very few of the softer sex, though, in Spur City—and children.

It had been quite a time since a first-class

"ruction"—as the Irishman would have said—had occurred in the mining camp, and the inhabitants thereof were not slow to improve the opportunity now afforded.

Bernice could see the bright flashes of fire that came from the pistols of the pursuers; hear the sharp reports that rung out so clearly upon the night-air.

With clasped hands, anxious eyes, a pale face, and a bosom that throbbed tumultuously, the girl tried to watch the progress of the chase.

The night was dark, though, and in a few seconds the crowd passed beyond the line of her vision, but she could still see the little patches of fire, hear the pistol-reports and the yells of the pursuing crowd, who were shouting like so many savages.

"Oh, merciful Powers! let him escape!" murmured Bernice, in anguish; "he is not fit to die. Give him time to repent; give him time to see the evil of his ways."

Then to the ears of the girl came the sound of the hoofs of a horse galloping rapidly away.

The reports of the revolvers came thicker and faster, the yells of the miners more and more discordant, and then—all was still, save that a busy hum, produced by moving feet and many voices, came to her listening ears.

"He has escaped, or else he is dead," she murmured, and her cheek grew paler still at the second thought. "I must learn the truth!" she exclaimed, wildly. "This suspense is too terrible to bear."

The noise of the voices and the sound of the feet grew louder and louder as the crowd came nearer and nearer.

As the miners came into sight, Bernice's eyes were strained with an eager look. She feared to behold the road-agent, a prisoner in their midst, or else to see him borne along, lifeless, by their hands.

Her fears were idle, for Overland Kit had escaped the hot pursuit.

The crowd surged up to the door of the saloon, and Bernice heard the conversation that had ensued between Ginger Bill and Judge Jones, relative to the escape of the outlaw. Then she heard the Judge's demand for volunteers.

Again Bernice trembled, and again, her cheek grew pale. In the simple words of the Judge she scented danger.

"Can he have guessed the truth, which has seemingly baffled all other eyes but mine?" she mused, anxiously.

She watched the little party proceed on their mission.

How strange is the quick instinct that dwells in the breast of a woman! Without any reason for her belief—without being able to tell why or wherefore—the thought flashed through her mind that the expedition of Judge Jones and his four volunteers bore danger to the man whom she had boldly declared she loved—Injun Dick.

Although the Judge and his men had been swallowed up in the darkness, yet still Bernice watched eagerly from the window.

She listened to the conversation of the miners, who were gathered in a little group in front of the saloon, discussing the late affair. She heard the opinion expressed:

"Since Yellow Jim went fur Big-nosed Smith, 'cos he said as how he was the first covyot to strike pay-dirt in Wildcat No. 1, it war the liveliest liddle time I've seed."

This by a veteran miner—one of the original Californian "diggers."

Bernice, carried away by the excitement of the moment, had never thought of closing the door of her apartment, which had been kicked open by the crowd in pursuit of the road-agent.

And as she leaned out of the window, listening to the talk of the crowd beneath, she was unconscious that her room was plunged in darkness, and that the door was wide open.

One thought alone occupied her mind—the fate of the man known as Overland Kit to the miners, but to her as Patrick Gwyne, the long-lost cousin, whom she had followed from the far Atlantic coast.

The rustle of a woman's dress within her room, and the flame of a candle illuminating the darkness that surrounded her, caused Bernice to withdraw her attention from the crowd beneath the window.

Bernice withdrew her head from the open casement, and turning around, beheld the girl, Jinny, standing, with a lighted candle in her hand, in the center of the room.

"I'm very sorry, Miss, that they should have disturbed you by entering your room so roughly," said Jinny, picking the candle up from the floor where Kit had thrown it, and placing it on the table, then lighting it by the flame of the candle that she held in her hand.

I suppose the excitement under which they were laboring excuses everything," Bernice replied, gazing with curiosity upon the face of the young girl.

A strange contrast there was between the two. Bernice, with her handsome face and the air which bespoke the breeding of a lady, and Jinny, the wild-flower, who had been reared amid the rough life of the mines; her face thin, and a look of shrewdness about the eyes and mouth that told of self-reliance, and a knowledge and courage far beyond her years.

"Yes, Miss, I suppose so," Jinny said, apparently not noticing the attention with which Bernice was regarding her. "I can't understand what got into Judge Jones. He came into the saloon with the rest at his heels, and asked where Dick Talbot was. I told him that he had gone out just after supper, and had said that he was going up to Gopher Gulley to have a little fun with the boys there. Then the Judge said that I must be mistaken; that he was sure he was in the house; and he and his men started up stairs at once. I asked Ginger Bill—that's the man with the red beard who drove the coach the night you came in, Miss—what the fuss was, and he said the Judge was after the road-agent, Overland Kit, and he s'posed he wanted Talbot to go with him. Injun Dick, you know, is looked up to by all the miners, pretty near. I followed the Judge right up stairs, and I heard 'em talk about searching the rooms. The Judge asked me which was Dick's room. I told him right away that there wasn't any use looking there, because you had the room; but I might just as well have talked to a lot of stones, for all the good it did. One of the men kicked open the door, and after that, of course, you know all that happened."

"Yes," Bernice replied, absently. The words of the girl confirmed the thought regarding Judge Jones' action that had come into her mind.

"Did this road-agent try to rob you, Miss?" Jinny asked.

"No; he came to warn me," Bernice replied, and then she looked earnestly into Jinny's face; a strange thought had entered

her mind. "Do you know any thing about this Overland Kit?"

Jinny looked astonished at the question. "Why, no; how should I?" she asked.

Bernice was satisfied. Jinny was ignorant as to who and what the outlaw really was. She had not guessed the mystery that surrounded Overland Kit.

"I can't understand how he got into the house, either," Jinny said. "He must have crept in the back way when there wasn't any one around. I'll try and not have you disturbed again, Miss." Then Jinny stood and looked for a moment, wistfully, into Bernice's face. It was evident that she wanted to say something more.

Bernice noticed the expression upon the face of the other, and waited for the question; but it did not come.

"Good-night, Miss," Jinny said, abruptly, and turning she left the room.

"Good-night," Bernice replied.

The door closing, Bernice was once more left alone. She sat silent in thought. She asked herself if it were not possible that she had made some terrible mistake; if the suspicion which she had allowed to take full possession of her mind was not rather the creation of a morbid fancy than actual truth, warranted by circumstances.

But the questions were in vain; she could not shake the belief that had so completely taken possession of her.

How long she remained silent in thought she knew not, but, judging from the extent of the candle that had been eaten up by the flame, it was some hours.

Although the time was fast verging to midnight, sleep seemed a stranger to her eyes. The ceaseless spirit of unrest that had taken possession of her brain forbade all thoughts or wish for slumber.

But at last, with a sigh, she rose to her feet, and prepared to disrobe for the night.

The street without was hushed into silence. Spur City was preparing for sleep.

Then, suddenly, on the still night-air, came the tramp of many feet and the hum

LOVELY AND NOBLE.

BY FRANK S. FINE.

You say she is lovely—
Pray is it the taste,
She bestows on her dress,
Or the very small waist
That a belt doth compress?
Does this make her lovely?

You say she is noble—
Does she toss her head high,
And sneer, as she goes
On the poor passer-by,
Who weareth poor clothes?
Does this make her noble?

You say she hath virtues—
She's noble, not proud,
She's lovely, not vain,
She gives to the crowd,
She relieveth the pain;
Yes, she is lovely and noble.

Strange Stories.

THE KNIGHT OF STAFFLEHAUSEN;
OR,
THE SPIRIT OF THE WATERS.
A GERMAN LEGEND.

BY AGILE PENNE.

"The knight rides on alone;
He rideth ever beside the river, although the day
be done."

The full round moon gleamed down upon the shining river, that, like a silver band, wound its way amid the gray rocks and somber foliage.

Beside the river rode a horseman—a young and handsome knight, with his long yellow hair and blue eyes; pure type of the old Germanic race.

He was called Otto of Stafflehausen; a scion was he of one of the old German families, who had held their heads up proudly when the Austrian Hapsburgs were but paltry knights. But for two years Sir Otto and his fortune had gone hand in hand.

There were two branches to the Stafflehausen family. Bitter was the strife as to which branch belonged the family domain. Division of the property was not thought of by either of the contending parties; "all or none," the motto of both. But, by valiant deeds, Sir Otto's father—good Sir Rupert—won the favor of the German emperor, Rudolph of Hapsburg, and a royal patent confirmed his claim to the family castle.

Ten years Sir Rupert held the family domain in peace; then the French brought fire and sword along the Rhine. Sir Rupert fled before the enemy, carrying the precious royal grant in an iron casket. Swimming the Rhine in his flight, a wave sucked him from his horse's back; burdened with the weighty iron casket, he sunk to rise no more. The royal patent that gave Stafflehausen Tower to Sir Rupert's line was buried in the river.

Unluckily for Sir Rupert's heir, just at this critical moment the German emperor, Rudolph, died, and was succeeded by his son, Albert II. He favored the claim of the other branch of the Stafflehausen family. His decision was quickly given.

"Let Sir Otto—Sir Rupert's heir—produce the royal patent granted by my father to his father, and the Tower of Stafflehausen is his. If he can not do this, my judgment is that the estate goes to Sir Conrad."

Sir Conrad represented the other branch of the family.

Now, as the emperor knew perfectly well that the royal patent was snugly lodged at the bottom of the Rhine, and that he might as well ask Sir Otto to give him the moon as the royal grant, unless some water-spirit aided him, of course he was well aware that he gave the Tower of Stafflehausen outright to Sir Conrad. But, he wished to avoid the appearance of injustice toward the unfortunate heir.

The emperor was a wise and politic ruler, as this action proved.

So, as Sir Otto rode along he looked wistfully at the shining river.

For two years the young man had left no means untried to recover the precious casket. He had employed the most famous divers in the world. Only one little omen of hope had he had.

One day the chief diver rushed into the room in the little inn by the river's bank, which was now Sir Otto's home. The water was streaming from his clothing—he didn't wear much. On his face was a look of joy and a goodly quantity of yellow mud from the bottom of the river.

"You have found something!" gasped Sir Otto, trembling with excitement.

"We have!" yelled the diver in triumph.

"The casket?"

"No; your father's body!"

Sir Otto was disappointed. He gave the remains of his aged sire decent burial though, but quietly told the divers that if they found the horse to let it stay, as he couldn't afford the expense of another funeral.

But the end was reached at last—the end of Sir Otto's money.

"No pay, no dive!" declared the watermen. They were as good as their word, and retired in a body.

Sir Otto despaired at last. And now he was riding to take a last farewell of the Lady Una, the only daughter of the fat Baron von Kiefels.

Sir Otto and Una had been betrothed for many a year; but as the time approached for their union, the unfortunate affair of the royal grant occurred. Sir Otto's cousin, Sir Conrad, was also a suitor for Una's hand, and the crafty Von Kiefels waited to see which of the young men would possess the family estate.

Sir Otto found Una in tears. The lovers met on the sward in the moonlight, just under the shadows of Kiefels Castle.

"Why do you weep, sweet one?" inquired Otto, anxiously, as he folded the weeping maiden to his manly bosom, which was covered by a very ragged doublet; for the young knight had spent all his money in paying the divers, not in buying new clothes.

"My father forbids me to see thee more," sobbed the maiden.

"The fat, tyrannical old fool!" cried Otto, in anger.

"Hush! Remember that he is my father!" moaned Una.

"I do remember. But for that fact I should have abused him grossly," replied Otto, in a tone of calm contempt.

"He wishes me to marry thy cousin, Sir Conrad."

"What, marry thee to that false-hearted villain!" exclaimed the knight, in wrath.

"Besides, he squints," said Una, plaintively.

"My sword shall drink his blood!"

"But, if he should kill thee?"

"Ah, I never thought of that," Sir Otto said, thoughtfully.

"And you haven't a sword, either," the maiden exclaimed, as she looked at her lover's side, and missed the weapon.

"No, I sold it to pay the cursed divers," the young man said, sorrowfully.

Then round the angle of the wall, in hot haste, came the fat Baron von Kiefels.

"Death of my soul! Did I not forbid thee seeing this fellow more?" the old man cried.

"Old man, once thou gavest me thy child," Sir Otto said.

"Once thou wert a landed knight; now thou art a landless squire," replied the baron, shrewdly.

"And is that the reason that you deny me thy daughter's love?"

"It is."

"Oh, father, I shall never love any one but Otto," said Una, sorrowfully, like a second Niobe, dissolving in tears.

"Do you take me for a Turk, daughter?" cried the baron, in rage. "I do not forbid your loving whom you like—the saints forbid—but you must marry the man I choose. You can love him or not, just as you please. I am not a hard-hearted father." Then the baron turned to the youth. "And for you, sir, think not that I would wrong you. I desire to treat you justly. If I follow the example of our wise emperor, I can not do wrong. As he spake, so speak I. Produce the royal grant which confirms your right to Stafflehausen castle and my daughter's hand is yours."

And without more ado, the fat baron took his daughter and retired into the castle, leaving Sir Otto to tear his hair and curse the evil fortune which had befallen him.

A last, long look the young knight took at the frowning Keep of Kiefels, the top of whose massive towers shone greenish-silver in the moonlight; then he sprang upon the back of his horse and dashed madly away.

His road lay by the river's bank.

On he went till he came to the spot where, two years before, his father, flying from the enemy, had entered the water, clutching the precious casket under his arm, and had found a grave beneath the waters.

Sir Otto dismounted and advanced to the water's edge. A deep, black pool lay before him. In wild rage Sir Otto shook his clenched fist at the sullen waters.

He guessed the power that had raised the tempest. One last kiss he pressed upon the pale lip of his bride, then madly leaped into the dark waters.

A wild yell of triumph rose from the surface of the water and rung above the howl of the wind.

As if by a miracle the storm abated.

The Knight of Stafflehausen was never seen again.

the banks of the river. I am called Stalacta, the queen of the water-spirits. I have often seen you riding along by the river. I know your sad history. When you gazed into the pool, by my power I made the water transparent, and with the lost casket lured you hither. Can you guess the reason?" The maid blushed as she put the question.

Sir Otto understood what was the correct thing to do and did it.

"I love you; will you be my bride?" he exclaimed.

The water-maid gracefully consented. The marriage took place.

For five days, Sir Otto remained contented beneath the waves. Then he began to pine for earth. All he wished was to return with the precious casket, produce the royal grant, turn Sir Conrad out of the castle of Stafflehausen, and then he would return to his bride.

Reluctantly, Stalacta consented, but warned him of vengeance if he broke his promise.

With the iron casket clutched under his arm, Sir Otto once again beheld the sunlight.

Great was his astonishment when he learned that he had passed five years beneath the waves. There, a day was equal to a year on earth.

Sir Otto produced the royal grant, turned his cousin out of Stafflehausen, and in triumph took possession of the family town.

To his utter astonishment he found that, despite threats and entreaties, the Lady Una had remained single, faithful to his memory. Of course his noble nature could not permit such constancy to go unrewarded. He forgot all about the water-queen who waited for him beneath the Rhine in the shell palace. He proposed to the Lady Una and was accepted.

All was joy in Kiefels castle. It was the wedding-night of the Lady Una and the Knight of Stafflehausen.

The marriage music floated on the murky air. Suddenly the crash of the music was silenced by terrific peals of thunder; the lights paled their fires before the blaze of the lightning.

The Rhine had risen rapidly, cutting off all escape from the castle. The guests were pale with terror, for the mighty strength of the river threatened to sweep away the tower.

Sir Otto threw open the casement and gazed out upon the angry waters. He remembered the threat of the water-queen.

being sunny and winsome, he grew stern and reticent, always, however, preserving his charming grace of manner.

"It used to grieve me to see him bearing, all alone, the great burden rolled on his shoulders, and one night, when we had finished our studies, and had lighted our cigars, I made a bold attempt to learn his secret."

"To my surprise, he turned as pale as a sheeted corpse when I jokingly asked him if 'Pet' had given him the mitten; he sprang from his study-chair, dashed his cigar through the window, and walked to and fro, in a fearful excitement, while I watched him in mute amazement."

"Then he paused before me, pale and rigid, his eyes flashing with the luridness of a maniac."

"Pemberton, for the sake of your soul's salvation, never mention that girl to me again! Come here!"

He linked his hand through my arm, and led me to a small closet in our bedroom, where we generally kept specimens of our science—mostly preserved in spirits in vials.

"Look at that," he whispered, huskily, and handed me a small bottle, in which, in the colorless liquid with which it was filled, I saw a finger-tip, jagged at the end, with the filbert-shaped nail neatly trimmed.

"Well, I said, 'there is nothing frightful about that, is there? I've seen dozens lying around loose in the dissecting-room.'"

"I laughed as I spoke, but he laid his hand heavily on my shoulder."

"Don't laugh, Pemberton; don't laugh, for you know nothing about it; only never mention her name again."

"He went back to his books, and I never questioned him again, although my heart ached for him."

"That term he graduated; we exchanged friendly letters for several months, and then, to my surprise and grief, I learned that the brave, handsome young fellow was dead."

A month after that, I received by express a package, that proved to be a sort of diary Travis had compiled for me, and the identical little vial containing the finger-tip. I have both now, and will read Travis Nottingham's diary to you as he penned it, omitting the dates, as they are not necessary to the recital."

"You remember, Pemberton, the evening I went down to Carlton's office, on Twenty-second street, to attend to any chance patients that might need advice while he was

dress trailing over the glowing red of the carpet; her tawny hair (that she had insisted upon wearing short while she was away) curling gracefully around her shapely head."

"As I closed the door, she turned to greet me."

"Travis, my darling!"

"She came across the floor, her hands extended, her eyes full of glad welcome. I took one hand in each of mine with a warm, firm grasp—and then a horrible, horrible spasm seemed to tear at my heart. Pemberton—Pemberton—her left little finger was minus its tip!"

"I must have betrayed my feelings in my face, for she looked eagerly at me."

"What is the matter, Travis?"

"I struggled a moment with myself. Of course I strove to throw off the fearful thoughts, but I could not. I was powerless under the crushing weight of those ghastly suspicions."

"I was surprised to see this."

"I pointed to it; she laughed, so merrily and lightly."

"Oh! that came from the accident at grandpapa's. I sprained my wrist just as I was starting, and mashed my finger so, I was obliged to have it amputated. That's nothing, is it?"

"She seemed so truthful; she was so nonchalant."

"I am not at all disgusted, but I painfully remembered how exceedingly like those others is a finger-tip I have at the University—the one I took from your uncle Hamilton's mouth."

"A little shudder ran over her, and her cheeks blanched for a second."

"Oh, how horribly gloomy you doctors are! Let's change the subject. Travis, do you love me?"

"The one second she stood there, paling before me, with that uneasy shifting of the eyes, had been a revelation—I saw it, I knew it, that my bride and the murderer of old Mr. Hamilton were one!"

"Pemberton, I can not portray my feelings. I pray you never may experience such."

"I looked down in her glorious eyes. Ah! how I had loved their opaline wells. How I shivered with horror and repulsion now."

"I fear I am half mad. I pray God it is madness. But did I not dress that finger in Dr. Carleton's office on the 21st day of last June?"

"I was so cold and stony; and she screamed out in a perfect wall of agony."

"You know you never did. Travis Nottingham! You know you never did!"

"Not for a boy the night of the murder?"

"She turned abruptly away, walked across the room, then came up to me again."

"Well?" she said, in a kind of husky voice.

"Shall I send for the finger-tip and match it?"

"No, no!" she shrieked. "Great heaven, that you should suspect me—me!"

"She crouched on the floor, writhing in her fright and misery."

"Answer me. It was you?"

"Then she sprang to her feet, and thrust the maimed hand in my face."

"There! there! Give me up to the gallows. Mrs. Travis Nottingham, the bride of an hour, to be hung by the neck till she is dead! dead! dead! and may God have mercy on her soul!"

"Pemberton—that for a scene in a bridal-chamber. Can you picture it?"

"I never saw her after that interview. I left her standing in her bridal robes. I could not endure to see her face; and she is gone, God knows where, to hide her guilt, while I will carry my grief to an early grave."

"That is all of the diary," continued Dr. Pemberton, as he closed the little volume, "but there is a grave in a cemetery in Pennsylvania in which Travis Nottingham sleeps, under the gloomy shade of a cypress tree, where I have seen a woman come, wan and white, with mourning robes, and a hand of perfect mold, save that the little finger tip is gone. A woman who weeps and wails, and who has seen, time and again, as my own eyes have seen, the pitiful eyes and pallid features of Travis Nottingham's ghost, as it hovers near the spot, ever pointing with deathly hand to her deformed finger, as she wrings her hands in ceaseless woe."

"And now my story is done. Do you not believe it?"

Saved at the Altar.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

"HECTOR WAINWRIGHT, here is the ring you gave me that night on the bridge," and Bertha Dennison drew the glittering but unostentatious betrothal ring from her finger and extended it to her lover, who received it with trembling hand.

"Bertha, I do not hate you for this act," he said with feeling, as he took the circlet of gold. "My heart still beats for you, and you alone. And if ever you repent your act, come to me and you shall be forgiven."

Then he walked away, and left her alone in the moonlight.

For several days, Bertha Dennison had longed for a dissolution of the betrothal bonds that existed between herself and the noblest of lovers. She really loved him—knew that she would be very happy as his wife; but, why did she dissolve the betrothal upon a pretext which, in fact, was none at all?

She was ambitious!

An Italian, styling himself Count Asma-deus Szorfa, had arrived at the sea-shore town, and Bertha's eyes were dazzled by his high-sounding name and his manners.

She was an heiress, and the fairest of the bevy of Braintrim beauties, and she wanted to shine in society as the Countess of Szorfa. Gardiner Dennison would not have objected to receiving Hector Wainwright, the rising physician, as a son-in-law; but, when he heard of the Italian's arrival, he added fuel to the fire of ambition that was consuming his daughter, and actually said, in her presence, that Szorfa would be welcomed into his family.

When Bertha was ready, she opened her battery of charms on the "Count," and many weeks had not waned when he knelt before her, and in poetic language, told her that she was his star, which he worshipped day and night.

Of course she could not resist his pleadings, and he rose to his feet the "happiest of men."

To the avowal of love Hector Wainwright was a listener. He was rambling listlessly through the grove when Bertha's voice fell upon his ears. He paused, and then came the declaration of love.



THE FATAL WITNESS.

"Oh, monstrous villain!" he cried, addressing the stream, "whose ravenous jaws hath swallowed up my father! Had I not spent all my money in feeling the thieves of divers—who may the benison of Satan rest upon—I would hire stout rascals and—like the Persian king—have thee well whipped with rods!"

The river rolled on; stopped not at the angry threats of the young knight; but, as the wavelets rippled against the bank, the sounds they made seemed like low, mocking laughs. At least, so Sir Otto thought, and in wrath that the river thus added insult to injury—first robbed him of his father, then laughed at his misery—he seized a great mass of rock that lay at his feet and cast it into the pool.

The rock was light gray in color, but, as it sunk beneath the wave it changed into a luminous golden tint, and cast around it a circle of light, some ten feet in extent, which made the water clear as crystal.

Sir Otto watched the change in amazement.

Down sunk the rock until it rested on the bottom of the river. Through the now transparent water the knight looked, and there, by the side of the rock, he saw the precious iron casket which contained the royal grant!

Without a thought of the danger, or even a prayer to the saints for aid, Sir Otto leaped headlong into the pool.

Hardly had the waters closed over his head when sense deserted him.

How long he remained in the swoon he knew not, but when he again opened his eyes, a strange scene was before him.

He was at the bottom of the Rhine, in a palace built of polished shells, and sparkling with precious stones.

Before him stood the fairest girl that he had ever looked upon, surrounded by a bevy of attendant beauties, not one though as fair as she.

Sir Otto guessed the truth at once. He was in the palace of the water-spirits. The nymphs of the Rhine had taken compassion upon him.

The knight was reposing upon a couch formed out of a gigantic sea-shell.

Springing to his feet, he knelt before the fair beauty, who was apparently the queen of the water-spirits.

"Rise, Sir Otto," said the spirit, in a sweet and melodious voice.

"You know who I am?" questioned the young man in great astonishment, rising as he spoke.

"Oh, yes! we spirits of the Rhine take a great interest in the mortals that dwell by

He guessed the power that had raised the tempest. One last kiss he pressed upon the pale lip of his bride, then madly leaped into the dark waters.

A wild yell of triumph rose from the surface of the water and rung above the howl of the wind.

As if by a miracle the storm abated.

The Knight of Stafflehausen was never seen again.

The Fatal Witness.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

A LARGE, cheery apartment, brilliantly illuminated; glowing carpet and curtains; walnut and crimson damask furniture; books, a piano, delightful recesses occupied by the easiest of easy-chairs; a pier glass, that reflected every object in this pleasant room.

It was the sitting-room at Pemberton Court, and the handsome man lounging by the grate was Elmer Pemberton, who owned all this elegance, who was a thriving physician in the village, and who was in love with Ida Lester, who was nestling in the cushions of a rocking-chair near her father.

"So you don't believe in ghosts, Lester?"

Doctor Pemberton knocked off the ashes from his cigar tip and looked at Ida as he addressed her father.

"No," the gentleman responded, promptly, "I do not, nor do I think any sensible man does."

Pemberton smiled.

"I'm sorry you have made such a sweeping assertion, for I do believe in them."

Mr. Lester's lips curled in good-natured scorn, and Ida nestled closer to him.

"Let me tell you of an incident that occurred while I was studying at—"

I solemnly assure you every word is true, and, perhaps, when you have heard me through, you will agree with me that 'their specterships' do sometimes revisit this world."

"My chum, Travis Nottingham, was one of the finest fellows it was ever my good fortune to meet; handsome, remarkably talented, and quite romantic, he possessed qualifications that made him a prime favorite wherever he went."

"The third term, Travis fell in love with a charming girl—I've forgotten her name except that he always spoke of her as 'Pet.' For a while he was supremely happy, and then came a great change over him. From

off for an evening's recreation? That night, the Twenty-first of June, 1868, was an era in my life. I will tell you the whole story now, Pemberton, that I know you wanted to hear that evening I showed you the finger-tip."

"I was lounging around the office, reading and smoking, when there came a fragile, swarthy-skinned lad, attired in almost mean clothing, who was faint and sick from the loss of the tip of his little finger, that had been cut off, he said, with a machine. I dressed the wound; he went away, and I thought no more of it until the next morning, when the whole city was electrified by the mysterious murder of old Morris Hamilton, who was found strangled, and in his mouth the tip of a finger!"

"I instantly divined that my boy-patient was the murderer. I set out for the scene of the tragedy, and, through Dr. Carlton's influence, succeeded in getting possession of that dainty finger-end."

"Pemberton, how could I, then, associate such a fearful crime with her?—'Pet,' I mean—how I shiver when I write the name!"

"So the affair grew old; vigilance slept; and the nine-days' talk ceased."

"Meanwhile, she—you may know I always mean but one woman when I say that—she had been away to her grandparents on a visit, until summoned to New York by Mr. Hamilton's executor, who, finding her nearest of kin, pronounced her sole heiress, in default of a will."

"Some people thought it strange so rich a man had left none, while others said he was always very odd in his ideas."

"I hastened to see her after her long absence, and met her in the darkened parlor, suffering from a sprain in her wrist, which she had received on the way home, so that her hand was all bandaged."

"Did I, for a moment, think any thing of that? Would you, Pemberton?"

"I caressed the wounded hand; and then begged her to agree to what I had been urging—a speedy marriage; joking about her newly-acquired wealth, and hoping she would find me an honest partner."

"Well, Pemberton, you will be astounded to learn we were married; very quietly, at the clergyman's residence, in early winter."

"The love he proffers is not Platonic," murmured Hector. "Such love he never knew. He is not a proper recipient of a beautiful woman's love. He loves Bertha's gold—not her matchless self."

These were Hector's convictions, uttered audibly; and, after a little while, he left the spot.

Just before entering his house, having summed up his speculations regarding Annadeus Sforza, he said aloud:

"That man is a criminal."

The three months that intervened between the betrothal and wedding quickly passed over. Braintrim, and the wedding-night arrived. Gardiner Dennison's mansion was ablaze with brilliant lights, which shone over fair women and brave men. It was the month of August, and the northern winds were raised to allow the cool sea-breeze to float into the rooms.

At last Bertha, leaning upon Count Sforza's arm, and attended by her bridesmaids, swept into the great parlor, and the crowd of guests surged in her wake, eager to see the ceremony performed. Every eye being fastened upon the "happy couple" before the surplined man of God, the revolver that rested upon the window-sill escaped notice.

Outside, and among the snowball bushes, crouched the possessor of the deadly weapon which was directed at the bridegroom's head. It was a woman with a haggard face, which still bore traces of lost beauty. She was clad in the deepest black, unrelieved by a single contrasting color. The arm that steadied the revolver seemed to have grown into an arm of iron, and the fire of insanity danced in the eyes that looked along the shining barrel.

Slowly the service book was opened, and the clergyman's eyes fell upon the pages. A moment later he looked up, and fixed his eyes upon the Italian.

"Do you take—"

The word which followed was drowned by the stunning report of a pistol, and, with a shriek, the bridegroom staggered back, to be caught by one of the groomsmen. Blood issued from a frightful wound in the temple, and it was plain that he was rapidly nearing the boundaries of the eternal world.

In a swoon, which was an admirable counterfeit of death, Bertha was borne from the parlor, and presently two men entered, dragging the murderer after them.

"Is he dead?" she cried, breaking away from her captors and springing to Sforza's side. The revolver was still clutched in her hands.

"Not dead, but dying," answered the physician, who was washing the blood from the Italian's face.

"I am glad of it," she said, and a cloud passed from her face and left it clear.

By this time Mr. Dennison had returned from his daughter's room, and, with an oath, he clutched the woman's arm.

"Why did you slay him?" he demanded, pointing with his disengaged hand to the dying man. "Speak, murderer, what was he to you?"

"My lover once, but now my victim," she answered, calmly gazing upon Sforza without an outward sign of remorse for her bloody deed. "In my country he was a robber, forger, counterfeit, and the brigand's king. He made love to me in my mountain home, when I knew naught of his notorious character. He took me to Venice, and left me to starve in the City of Islands. But, I did not starve. I lived for vengeance. With a price upon his head he fled Italy, and I followed. He is dead now; let me depart in peace."

Her last sentence drew the gaze of the spectators to Sforza, and, to their astonishment, they saw that the spirit had forever taken leave of its earthly tenement.

Gardiner Dennison released the woman's arm, and she turned to depart, when two city detectives entered the room.

"Gentlemen, whom seek you?" asked Dennison, glancing significantly at the woman in black.

"We carry a warrant for the arrest of Annadeus Sforza."

"There he lies."

The officers stepped forward and silently gazed upon the dead.

"We will take his murderers, then," said one, and quietly they departed, taking with them a black-robed maniac.

The man-hunters had arrived too late to prevent the taking of a human life.

One by one the wedding-guests deserted the tragic spot, and the following day the ex-bridegroom was buried. Slowly Bertha recovered from the fever into which the tragedy related above had thrown her, and one day she went to Hector Wainwright and confessed all—her love for him—who forgave her fully, and he took her to his heart, as the betrothal ring again was tenderly placed by his hand upon her finger.

"The Avenging Angels: OR, THE BANDIT BROTHERS OF THE SCIOTO, A BORDER AND INDIAN TALE."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SILENT HUNTER," "QUEEN OF THE WOODS," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXV—CONTINUED.

As the Bandits appeared to succumb without a struggle, no further notice was taken of them, and the Rattlesnake continued:

"I am Rattlesnake, the mighty sachem of the Hurons. Sixty moons and sixty suns have I been on the trail of the hereditary foes of my race. My tomahawk is red with the blood of warriors who fell in battle. But Rattlesnake is weary; he would revisit the wigwams on the great plains by the big Lake; but he can not go home empty. His body might leave, but his heart would be in the Catawba Hills. He waits for his bride—Matata, the Red Rose of the Prairies!"

"Ugh!" said Theanderigo, with a bend of his head.

"That is enough," continued Kenewa, who knew that the other wanted to know the whole proposition. "For Rattlesnake, except that a little sister is a prisoner, too; she must return to the home of her fathers."

"She is very young; the way is long; she is welcome to the tents of the Shawnees," replied Black Hawk.

"My brother has spoken. Here is a pale-face chief. He is a great warrior and chief in his native land. There are those who are dear to him in this village. Let all I have mentioned be released, let the hatchet be buried, and Open Hand of the long-knives will send a big boat, with powder and blankets and guns, and all things that delight the heart of an Indian."

"Run!"

"As much run," cried Roland, "as would float the barge which my friend here has spoken of."

Theanderigo bowed coldly.

"And what would the Rattlesnake of the Hurons," he said, addressing the other, in a low and meaning tone, "give to the Black Hawk of the Shawnees if he found the maidens spoken of?"

"What would I give?" replied the young warrior, in low and measured tones, indicating thought.

"I have spoken."

"Give me the maidens, with your hand upon your breast, saying, 'They have been as my daughters in my camp, and I will give you Carcajou. Injure but a hair of their heads, and I will send you his scalp.'"

No Indian caution or reserve could restrain the cry of amazement on one side, of rage on the other.

The Bandits rubbed their hands.

But Theanderigo—who, with all his ferocity, had gained much of his influence and power through a reputation for strict justice—waved his hand, and when a dozen glittering tomahawks were raised in the air, advanced and put his arm round Rattlesnake.

The tumult ceased as if by magic. A sudden silence followed.

"Theanderigo is a great chief," said the Shawnee, after a pause; "his voice has been heard afar over the prairies. When he speaks the savage bear and crouching panther hide themselves and are silent. His word is law. If the Rattlesnake of the Hurons will bury the hatchet for twelve long moons (months) and restore the Wild Hog to his friends, pointing gracefully to his allies, 'the way between the red-skin camps is not long—the Red Rose of the Prairies and her sister can walk it when they please. A chief has but his word; but the pale-faced girls are the prisoners of the pale-faces yonder. With the setting sun they will be given to them.'"

Roland advanced. He was deadly pale, a cold, livid perspiration was on his brow.

"If these young ladies be with the white warriors of the prairies, I am prepared to treat for their ransom."

"And forgive and forget?" sneered Mo.

"Never! If you sell me your prisoners I will give you such law as may be agreed on. But that over, I will hunt you down for the vile vermin that you are. But name your price. Were it half my fortune—and that is no small bribe—you shall have it if you bring them here. My name is known; an order for the money will be as good as the money. I give you a month to enjoy it, and then I will be like a bloodhound on the trail."

"Cuss your money," said Mo; "we ain't a-going to be trapped into their settlements—no, never. So, as money ain't no use, you see, we've concluded to keep the gals, pretty Martha and all, so you can tell the old father and young lover. That's my say; so put that in your pipe and smoke it."

The Indians waited until the conference was over.

"Will the Rattlesnake of the Hurons give up the Wild Hog to his people?" said Theanderigo, with a strange smile.

"No," said Kenewa; "I can not bury the hatchet with wolves: the coward pale-faces must die. Chiefs, Kenewa thanks you for your attention; but the Rattlesnake will soon be craving for their blood. But my nostrils are not offended; I smell brave men and warriors, not miserable hen-roost stealers. Faugh! it is the wind of cowards that comes across me."

And with a graceful bend to the Indians, Rattlesnake took his friend by the hand and retired.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE WAR-CHANT.

A DEAD SILENCE succeeded.

The Bandits of the Scioto would gladly have started on the trail of the two men, but this Theanderigo sternly forbade.

The truce which had been entered into wanted three-quarters of an hour of its conclusion, and during this period the persons of the envoys were sacred.

But the Black Hawk of the Shawnees would probably have got rid of his dangerous and disagreeable allies had he been less conscientious; for on the very skirt of the forest the whole party of Backwood Avengers joined Rattlesnake and Roland, handing them their arms.

The issue of the embassy was at once made known, and the whole party prepared for war.

While the Avengers are preparing for the final and desperate conflict—which now could not be delayed—let us for a moment return to the Shawnee village, where events are occurring of some interest to our characters.

The preliminary acts of a savage when about to enter upon the war-path have been often referred to, and yet may not be familiar to all our readers. As this will serve to bring a certain climax about, we the more readily venture on a beaten track, and yet one so true, and at the same time new or rare, as to be worthy of note.

As soon as the envoys were out of sight the meeting broke up. The warriors generally knew that their chiefs would act for them, and so amused their leisure in firing volleys and making hideous noises, enough to have appalled a menagerie of wild beasts.

The Bandits, sulky and sullen, kept aloof, watching with jealous eyes the wigwag which contained the three white prisoners and Matata's sister.

Only four in the midst of so many redskins, they were compelled to be cautious, as, though the Indians are in general pretty faithful to their white allies, a ready excuse for their destruction might be found.

They were now planning their own course of action during the pitched battle which would doubtless soon take place.

The statement that the Shawnees were about to give up their white prisoners to the Bandits was, as these latter well knew, a mere evasion, as nothing of the kind would be done while an enemy was in the land.

"These here cursed heathens," said Mo, "is trying to best us, brothers, and I'm for besting them."

"How so?"

"Why, in this here fight we're very likely to get killed. Anyhow, if them devils of Avengers don't get us, this here Theanderigo will. I mean to be upside on 'em."

"Tell us how?"

"Well, they'll be up to some kind of 'thar black antics soon—a dance of some cussed kind or other. What say you? When the devils are mad-like, shall we cop the women and run?"

"That's the ticket."

"We shall have all the night afore us, if we don't show 'em little 'n—l, why my name ain't Mo, that's all."

As these fellows were always ready for any act of ruffianism, this plot required no further elucidation; and lest any of them should be suspected or watched, the whole dispersed as soon as their several parts had been agreed on.

It was an hour before sundown when the council of the elders was over, and then a young warrior might have been seen advancing with slow and measured steps toward the tree which, growing almost in the middle of the clearing, had served to indicate by its shadow the hour of the time.

This youth, who was armed only with a hatchet, began slowly to bark the tree, which, being done, he moved on one side and watched.

A second then came, who, reaching as high as he could, cut the upper part of the tree away, leaving only the naked and blazed trunk, and rejoined his companions.

Then came two others with some paints, with which they proceeded to daub the post.

The mass of warriors looked on with a gloomy and ominous silence, which seemed to indicate that the result was not unexpected.

The post intimated to all that the contest they were about to engage in was war to the knife.

All knew before what was to happen, but, like more civilized people, they like to hear the official decision of their superiors or chosen chiefs.

The Bandits did not disguise their contempt, at all events, as far as looks were concerned; no one venturing to say any thing in violation of Indian prejudices, which are in many instances quite as rational as many of our own customs.

Theanderigo, surrounded by all the leading warriors. Even the warriors of Carcajou were there. Now that they knew he was a prisoner in the hands of the Hurons, they had no excuse for blaming the other Shawnees, while they had him to avenge. Many of the less celebrated chiefs, too, aimed at succeeding him, which they could only hope to do by greatly distinguishing themselves.

Theanderigo was in his war-paint, completely naked, save his leggings and girdle; while his whole head and shoulders were painted black, with hideous red and white streaks.

For one of his rank and age the effort was great to take upon himself duties generally delegated to some more youthful warrior; but the enemy they had to contend with was worthy of the act he was now about to commit.

Rattlesnake was a name which had for several years been cast in the teeth of Theanderigo; and many a time and oft he longed with a deep, anxious longing, to come face to face with one who divided with himself a reputation for valor and skill in combat.

His astonishment was great to find him so young; but as no Indian who respects himself ever lies, nobody for a moment suspected any falsehood on the part of Kenewa.

The Black Hawk, as soon as he saw that his colleagues were ready, began walking round the post with a slow, measured step, something like the ancient dances of all savage tribes, while all the time he chanted in full and powerful accents one of the war-songs of his tribe.

Then came the well-known and terrific war-whoop.

No sooner was this uttered than all responded, and such yells arose as fairly drove the birds that had collected on the skirt of the clearing to seek another resting-place.

But when all the Shawnee warriors began to whirl round, the spectacle here became absolutely fearful. Where so many hideous, fierce-looking and menacing faces could have come from was a mystery, while their throat emanations were appalling.

At last, Theanderigo, as the sunset quivered on the tree-tops, struck the painted post at the top, leaving his hatchet in the wood.

Then in rushed the younger warriors of the tribe, the elders filing off to take up their positions around the chief.

In ten minutes there remained of the tree, but a number of shapeless splinters on the ground, the youths in minority of battle doing useless deeds upon the insensate trunk, scalping and slaying without mercy or pity.

Then, the campaign being opened, all retired to their posts, to await the command of their leader.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN UNCHERMONIOUS EXIT.

WHEN the fury of the Indians was at its height, Moses Horne made the sign agreed on between himself and his brothers, and disappeared in the mass of wigwags, to which not even the women had yet retreated, they being equally intent on watching the war preparations with the men.

The tent to which, under the charge of two ancient beldames, Matata had been confined by order of Theanderigo, was that to which the chief of the Bandits took his way.

Suddenly an altercation between the two crests and a man drew her attention, and ere she could catch the words, a tall man, wrapped in a loose blanket coat, stood before her.

"Well, gal," he said, in a careless, off-hand kind of way, "guess you've heard the news?"

"No."

"The bloody Rattlesnake's been in the village."

"Matata knows the voice of her brave."

"Then you've got tarnation long ears. But no joking, gal, and I'll tell you. This Huron here's a considerable spunky fellow, and him 'ar all alive to make a swap."

"What exchange?"

"Why he offered to take you for the rampaging ruffian Carcajou, the Wild Hog, which was taken in some mysterious manner by them blasted Backwood Avengers."

"The Wild Hog was taken from where the Big Long-knives stands by the pale-faced scout?"

"Snakes!—but blamed if I don't believe 'er!"

That chap's the devil! Wall, the Shawnees was inclined to buy 'er up; but that didn't suit your Kenewa. He must have the hull bilin' of the gals, and that the Shawnees don't seem to see; so it's war to the knife, and no quarter."

"Why is not the white Indian, the renegade, with his companions?" asked Matata, with a lofty air that might have become a queen.

"Girl," said the robber, advancing, and

taking her by the arm, which he clutched nervously, "the Shawnees have behaved cussed bad to us—they've crowded over us, and want mighty quick to rob us of our prisoners."

"The Huron will spit on you all—will make petticoats for the Shawnees, and burn the Big-knives alive."

"Well, they mout," said Moses, with a laugh; "but I've got a plan. Me and my brother is sick of these yar do-dotted Shawnees, and mean to give 'em the slip, and surrender to the enemy. If we take in you gals, all safe and sound, don't you think now they mout forgive us?"

"No."

"You are positive?"

"Can you bring the dead to life? Can you restore to the maiden with the raven locks the soul which has fled?"

"I reckon, gal," says Moses Horne, "that you're upspoken the truth. Wall, if it can't be, it can't be; but, cuss me, then, if Injine, Avenger or Judge, ever sees the ind of your little finger! Gal, you're mipe!"

And before she was aware of his intentions, he had cast the blanket over her with such rapidity as to completely envelop her before she could shriek or call out.

Then the bulky ruffian raised her to place her on his shoulder, which, however, he had not done ere he received behind a kick, given with such hearty good will, dexterity, and able choice of position, as to send him flying headlong from the tent.

One glance over his shoulder showed the defeated Bandit the tall form, hideous paint and well-known garb of Carcajou, the Wild Hog.

Indignant at such conduct on the part of an ally, whose presence, however, in the camp was a mystery not readily to be explained, Moses was about to return and ask an account of his mysterious conduct, when the appearance of a number of young men, sent to guard the huts during the expected conflict, induced the baffled ruffian to walk away, and hasten to alarm his brothers, who were on a similar errand in the wigwag containing the other prisoners.

The measures taken by the masterly eye of Theanderigo had at once upset all his plans with regard to the girls.

As at any moment the daring band who had penetrated so far into the enemy's land might attack the camp, Black Hawk—instead of venturing to meet the foe, which he fully intended doing on some more advantageous battle-ground, and where, too, his men would not be agonized by the sight of their little ones—had placed several parties of men at points about a hundred feet from the wigwags, in complete darkness.

Then, in front of the wigwags—those of the White River Shawnees were torn down for fuel—a line of fires was placed, across which no man could step without being seen.

Within this wall of light the patrol of some fifty youths, not yet admitted as braves, entered, armed with bows, lances, and some old muskets which could be spared.

The young fellows, whose bosoms swelled with an ardent equal to that of their sires, at once proceeded to send forth the Bandits of the Scioto to join the combatants. With curses, not loud but deep, the ruffians went, vowing that, somehow or another, they would avenge all their insults.

The patrol then induced the women to retire within their wigwags, closed the tents of the prisoners, placing aged and sleepless cronies at their entrance, and then laid down half-way from the fires to watch; resolved that, did occasion require it, they would not disgrace the name of their elders.

But where was Carcajou, the Wild Hog, all this time?

Well, strange as it may seem, he was secreted under the rude platform which supported the panther-skin couch which the liberality of Theanderigo had provided for the young wife he hoped in a few hours to take to his bosom.

When the tent was closed, and Matata had seen that the aged beldames were sufficiently away to make whispering safe, she turned with a girl's light laugh to the big Shawnee, and made a sign.

The warrior crawled from his somewhat ignominious position, and sat up.

"Spect Moses thort it war the devil," said the individual who wore the garb and paint of Carcajou, laughing in his dry, silent way.

"Him run like hare," replied Matata.

"But I say, Mat," grinned Steve, "spect you got to pass the night—"

"Hush!" said Matata.

In less than a minute she had covered the scout up with skins in a dark corner, just as the tent-door was opened and the flare of a torch was cast into the skin wigwag, held in the hand of a woman.

But erect behind it was Theanderigo.

"The Big-knife of the whites told me that Carcajou was here," said the chief, with a hurried glance round the tent.

"Carcajou," replied Matata, who held her head dress in her hand, and had all her dark flowing locks about her neck, as if preparing to lie down, "whose tongue is forked as the snake's, was here last night."

"Wagh! And what wanted Carcajou?"

"A Huron maiden has laughing eyes," said Matata, with a merry, girlish chuckle.

"The Wild Hog is a beast. What became of him?"

"The scout of the long-knives, the bosom friend of the Rattlesnake, took him on his shoulder and carried him away to the hills—he has not since returned."

"And what wanted the Big Robber?"

"Red and white are the same," continued the artful girl, with a pout, "but they can not all have Matata."

The eyes of Black Hawk glared terribly, but not at the Prairie Rose; his thoughts were far away—or rather, he was devising how to divide the vengeance which he mentally vowed against both the false Shawnee and his white ally.

"Would Matata wish for any thing," he said, in a low tone, "before her husband leaves to command his young men in the field?"

"Matata is very lonely—she likes not to be alone—she would gladly see her sister."

There was a winning softness, a gentleness, a music in her voice which made the countenance of the chief brighten.

"It shall be so; and to-morrow the Prairie Rose shall have more horses and more slaves than any Indian girl ever saw."

With which most undignified speech the warrior left, afraid that if he remained he should unbend too much from his dignity.

What a cunning female tongue, backed by a bright eye and dimpled cheek, can do with a middle-aged man, they themselves

only know; it is difficult for any one to imagine what they can not do.

Matata had won a great victory, and she knew it.

Ten minutes later the young sister entered the tent with the news that Ella was ill, Etie almost broken-hearted, and Martha the sole support of the party.

This determined Steve at once to change his quarters, which he knew well how to do, having entered the tent by cutting a hole under that very bed where he afterward was concealed. The wigwags were only six feet apart, and by sending the girl first, so as not to alarm the poor prisoners, he was able, with Matata, to glide out, the more unnoticed that the women and children were talking loudly.

Ella was ill a low fever was on her, the effect of a change of life—from luxury to suffering. Etie was overwhelmed with grief; while Martha, though trying to be hearty and jolly, made a poor attempt at cheerfulness.

Steve sent the young girl in search of some herbs, always kept by middle-aged Indian mothers; and, very soon, by the assistance of Matata, concocted a potion that relieved Ella and sent her to sleep, while another roused and revived Etie.

"And now, gals," said Steve, as he handed long, sharp knives to all, "never mind about the fever. Please God, we'll be free to-morrow, or else you'll be angels in heaven! For," he added, with a shudder, "rather than these robbers and red niggers shall catch you in the hour of intoxication and victory, this shall set you free;" and he showed his hunting-knife handle.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE HURON'S STROKE.

WHEN the Rattlesnake of the Hurons and Roland rejoined their friends it was with the firm resolve to attack at once, but in this the young chief was doomed to disappointment. There are certain received practices among redskins which a chief may not disdain, any more than a civilized soldier may bid defiance to that discipline which is the life and soul of an army.

A council was a matter of course, but there was another reason for delay.

A panting courier had just come in on horseback, after a tremendous ride, to announce the rapid approach of sixty warriors, the very best men of the tribe.

It was quite midnight, then, before the coalesced forces marched; but, in the mean time, scouts and runners had been sent forward to dislodge any skulkers, and to keep the woods free of any ambush.

But the Shawnees had resolved to do battle where they knew the ground; and in and around the Huron camp all was still.

gave a whispered order to one of the young men, who at once left the camp with Humphreys and Tom Smith.

The Judge silently followed them. He hankered sorely to be near his children.

The woods were now still and silent, though daylight was not far off. The attacking force was about eighty, which the Rattlesnake divided into three parties. One he commanded himself; one he left to Roland; a third would have been left for Steve, but, in his absence, a Huron of powerful frame was chosen. His name was Big-foot.

The party led by Kenewa was forty in number, and with these went Carajon, the Wild Hog, who, indeed, with rage at his captivity, which many of the Hurons would gladly have ended, but were prevented by Kenewa, he being the prisoner of Steve the scout.

Roland Edwards, with such of his avengers as remained, the laborer, and one Mason, headed a party of twenty.

The center or main body was that headed by the Rattlesnake, to which the two troops of twenty were as wings. They were to be about a hundred yards apart, and to advance all together on the Shawnees.

The spot in the forest where these arrangements were made was silent as death, so that when the several bodies moved in the direction of the village the faintest whisper might have been detected.

We will follow first the center of the little army, for there lay the fortune of the day.

It may appear an act almost of madness for between eighty and ninety warriors to advance to the attack of more than double their number. In the first place, however, the Hurons were all picked, active, skillful, and resolute men, while, from the generosity, both of the Judge and Roland, they were equipped with far superior weapons to what the Shawnees could boast of.

They were, further, led by a chief whose heart was in the enemy's camp; the earnest and devoted affection of Rattlesnake for the Prairie Rose being well known, though Indians are not in the habit of speaking of such matters.

The presence of some good shots of the long-knives was also an inducement; and yet it is a question if even the most resolute chief would have advanced to the attack but for the knowledge that reinforcements were nigh.

The woods were still wrapped in the cloak of night as the several parties moved on.

Their advance was very different to what, in usual, even with such light forces as those which were here collected. They did not advance either in column or Indian file, but abreast, each man keeping his neighbor in view, but, with that exception, moving entirely on his own responsibility.

It was a splendid sight to see that row of dusky frames moving, with the stealth of ghosts, through the underbrush and under the trees, their naked shoulders and heads chiefly visible.

Kenewa was the bravest among the brave, and had he commanded something like equal forces would have led his followers to the charge without delay, as might have done the most ardent leader of the whites, thus making the contest a pitched battle. But he knew the inferiority of his forces, and that any such course must put him in violent contradiction to the received practices and opinions of his countrymen.

With the sun soon shining through the tops, with the balmy wind of summer to inhale, with all the brightness of God's lovely creation on earth to gaze upon, these men crawled through the green and grassy glades, on full thoughts of murder intent, thoughts which one sight of nature should extinguish in the most inhuman breast.

War is the greatest curse which our evil natures has brought upon ourselves. It is at best only worthy of savages, and would scarcely ever disgrace old civilized nations but for the culpable ambition and reckless wickedness of tyrants and their minions.

Kenewa, having marshaled his forces, retained only two braves, who had charge of Carajon, and moved slowly on, gazing around with that anxious beating of the heart which always precedes great events.

But the forest in advance appeared as silent, as still, as when it arose from the muddy waters which once had sway over the whole of earth.

On every side the eye was able to penetrate beneath the long and shadowy vistas of the trees; but to no purpose as yet, for all was peaceful, pleasant, and, as it were, slumbering.

Suddenly Kenewa lifted his left arm. Every warrior stopped and stooped, so that in another moment it appeared as if the foot of man had never passed that way.

One or two favorite warriors crept to the side of Kenewa.

"They come," he said, pointing to the ground.

They stooped low, put their ears to the ground, and clearly heard the faint sound of men marching through the forest.

The Rattlesnake looked about him. In front was what once might have been a mountain-torrent bed, but now overhung with brushwood.

Beneath there was a hollow way, like a tunnel.

Kenewa whispered to his braves, and, casting his rifle into the hollow of his arm, led the way. In another moment he was silently followed by his whole party. The youthful warriors who guarded Carajon came last.

This worthy never spoke. The buffalo tag which tied his arms behind him might hurt, blows might urge him on, but no whisper of complaint came from his lips. His eyes were, however, cast about in every direction. Not a motion of the Hurons escaped his sight.

Soon the whole band were on the run, Kenewa at the front. The chief, however, halted as soon as he was at the head of the hollow as there a whole thicket of live oaks were visible. In front of these, toward the camp, the ground lowered a little.

The Huron brave still, therefore, was about to keep between the precipitous banks of the winter stream, to take advantage of the thick shrubbery, when a low gurgling sound attracted his attention. He looked around.

A chief was pointing to a dense mass of pecan bushes in front. Before Kenewa could ask a question, there burst from the arched of Carajon, the Wild Hog, a yell so fearful that his conductors started in amazement, and then came a deadly volley, which laid one of the young guardians of the Shawnee low, while the other sought refuge behind a tree.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 55.)

CAMP MEETING IN THE WOODS.

BY GEORGE W. BURGAT.

The white mists from the woods arise,
Like the thin smoke of sacrifice
From Indian altars in the shade
Where red men wild have bowed and prayed.

The soft green moss invites the knees
To bend in worship; and the trees
Lift up their arms in the lifting air,
Where leafy lips are whispering prayer.

Beneath this roof of braided boughs,
We may renew our sacred vows;
For here we see the first divine,
In burning bush and flaming vine.

This is the temple of the Lord,
Here nature sings in sweet accord,
Her holy hymns of grateful thanks,
From shadowy groves and grassy banks.

Oh, this is consecrated ground,
No human footsteps can be found
Leading to haunts of crime and woe;
Flowers strew the path in which we go.

As vapors rise toward the sun,
As brooklets to the ocean flow,
As plants spring upward from the sod,
Our thoughts here turn to Heaven and God.

The rocks are altars by the brook,
Our Bible, Nature's open book,
The lowering pine our tapering spire,
The cheerful birds our happy choir.

Red blossoms are the fragrant urns,
And censer cups where sweetness burns;
God is our trust and He will bless
Our worship in the wilderness.

Border Reminiscences.

A Fandango, and What Came of It.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

We rode into the Old Mexican town of Valverde, just as the sun was dropping behind the western range, and following the guidance of Jim Curtis, who "had been there once afore," we soon found quarters and dismounted.

What took us, a troop of half-score Texas Rangers, away up there, has nothing to do with the incident I am about to relate. That we were there is sufficient.

At that time, and, indeed, ever since their organization, there had been bad feeling between the Rangers and Mexicans, and it seldom happened that the two met, especially if the latter were the strongest in point of numbers, without insult and blows being exchanged. And in this connection I will say, that at no other time or place were these collisions so certain to occur as at the fandango, where the maddening feeling of jealousy was sure to be engendered and added to the dislike already existing upon the part of the greasers.

Some of the fellows had scattered the moment the cattle had been seen to and a few mouthfuls booted, so eager were they for a sight of the place after over six weeks in the saddle; but Lamond and myself, preferring the enjoyment of a quiet smoke on the veranda, had determined to stay at home.

We had some doubts as to our being allowed this privilege, and very soon found that these doubts were correct.

We were suddenly invaded by the scouting party, who had returned with glowing accounts of a great fandango that was then in progress beyond the plaza, and one and all, they declared we must join them.

"You see, old fellow," said Tom Oakley, "there's no telling when these greasers may show their teeth, and even if we all go there'll not be any too many of us to get fair play."

That was precisely my objection, and also Lamond's, but we were overruled, made to buckle on our six-shooters, and, in a body, leaving only one man to see to things, we started for the dance.

I need not pause to describe the fandango. The long, low room dimly lighted; the orchestra—a flute, harp, and guitar—in one corner; gayly dressed senoras, with flowing lace mantles, and the inevitable fan; *poblanos*, with short petticoat, neatly turned ankles, and flashing eyes; dark-bordered crooles, wrapped in ample cloaks; *rancheros*, scowling from behind the folds of gaudy *serapes*; *leperos*, with ready knife; and occasionally the stalwart, buckskin-clad figure of a trapper or hunter, all go to form a scene that, from repeated description, is familiar to the general reader.

It was yet early when we arrived, though the music was in full blast, and a dozen or more couples gliding over the well-waxed floor.

For more than an hour we stood in a group near the large door, looking on, during which time the room rapidly filled, until it became crowded to a degree that seemed to preclude the possibility of dancing.

First one of us, and then another and another sought his partner, until all were whirling, or rather "scrounging," their way around the room.

My companion proved a most charming one, and though she could not speak a word of English, nor I of Spanish, yet we got along smoothly and with evident satisfaction upon both sides.

So well satisfied was I, that I unfortunately overlooked the fact that this customary or proper to thus monopolize the little beauty, and would probably have remained thus oblivious, had not Lamond, during a pause in the dance, touched my arm, and whispered in my ear:

"You seem to be well in for it, Ralph; but take my advice and drop the girl. Look over in the corner by the musicians, and you'll see a pair of eyes, that mean mischief, watching your movements."

I instinctively glanced in the direction indicated, and saw, standing back as if to avoid recognition, a tall figure, wrapped in a heavy cloak, such as are worn by the better class, with which the face was muffled completely. Only the eyes were visible, but they were strikingly so. They seemed fairly ablaze with passion, and as they met my own, appeared to emit a mortal defiance.

At the same moment, probably directed by my glance, the girl caught sight of the shadowed figure; the effect was startling. With an affrighted exclamation, she wrenched her hand from my grasp, and, with a regular *dice*, disappeared amid the dancers.

Lamond had been watching us, and immediately came up, laughing heartily:

"Let her go. You are well rid of her, I tell you. And now, for the balance of the evening, keep your eye open for that greaser you saw in the corner."

The girl was gone, but the damage had already been done.

It was not long before the usual signs preceding a row began to manifest themselves. Gradually the Mexicans separated them-

selves, and quietly gathered together at the upper end of the room.

Several of the better class, especially the ladies, were seen hurrying away, while new faces, those of *rancheros* and *leperos*, began to scowl upon our little party. They had been sent for to take part in the coming fight.

All this time there was a snow of dancing kept up, but there was no longer any life or *vin* to it. The men looked savage, while the women's faces wore an anxious, frightened look.

"Look to yur weepins, boys," said Jim Curtis, in a low tone, as he passed through our party, who by this time were all standing in a bunch, "an' keep er nigh ther door an' winderes es yur kin. Ther's goin' to be a— to pay hyar in a minit er two."

As the ranger spoke, I felt something cold touch my hand, and looking hastily down, I saw my dog, a great favorite, standing by my side, seeking some acknowledgment of his presence.

He had wearied of my absence and had come to hunt me up.

Fearing that if he remained in the room during the row, if any should occur, he might be injured, I ordered him, rather harshly, to go home.

Always obedient, the spaniel started across toward the door, near which he encountered a *ranchero*, who, without the slightest provocation, raised his heavy boot and sent the animal howling into the street.

Unfortunately for the Mexican, the ranger, Curtis, chanced to be near at hand. He instantly wheeled and planted a blow squarely between the fellow's eyes, knocking him clear from his feet, and landing him, "all of a heap," in the middle of the floor.

That, of course, brought matters to a focus.

As though by preconcerted action, every light in the upper end of the room was suddenly extinguished, thereby leaving the Mexicans in comparative darkness, while we were fully exposed by the glare of half a dozen lamps and candles stuck against the wall above our heads.

"Out with the lights," shouted some one, and while we were busy at that work, the greasers opened fire and charged.

Before they reached us the room was in total darkness, but a moment later they were upon us, and the fight commenced. As much of it as I saw, or rather heard and felt, was fearful, but that was not much.

I had fired one barrel of my six-shooter, and was feeling for a cloak or *serape* to empty the next one into, when suddenly the whole firmament, with every star twice its usual size, flashed before my eyes, an agonizing pain shot through my head, and then—unconsciousness.

I had a dim, uncertain idea, as I fell, that I had been struck, but with what, or by whom, I could not then tell.

I must have remained in this condition for some length of time, for when consciousness returned, I found myself lying in the bottom of a small boat, or canoe, which was being rapidly propelled through the water by two men, one forward and the other aft, using paddles in a way that betokened hurry.

In the course of a few minutes the canoe grounded upon a soft bank, the forward man stepped ashore, dragging the little vessel well up, after which he returned, and, with the other's aid, I was lifted out and deposited upon the damp earth near at hand.

Then, for the first time, I discovered that I was bound, hand and foot, and that most securely.

What it all meant was a profound mystery. I remembered the fight at the fandango, and at the moment had a most lively curiosity to know how it had ended; also my being knocked on the head; but why I had been brought here? Those two fellows were taking a good deal of trouble, evidently, but how it was going to pay them I could not imagine.

There was a full moon, but scudding clouds obscured her light so that I could not succeed in catching a fair view of my captors' faces.

For some time, as they moved about a small tree, fixing something, I tried to do so, and at last succeeded.

I saw only the eyes, but that was enough. They were the same that had glared upon me from the corner of the room at the fandango, and I was no longer at a loss to imagine why I was in my present predicament.

The villain was wreaking his vengeance upon me for daring to make so free with his *dulcinea* at the dance.

By the time I had arrived at this not very agreeable conclusion, the pair were ready to enact another scene in this little drama by moonlight.

Grasping me by either arm, they jerked me upon my feet, and, carrying me behind the fringe of chaparral that lined the bank, stood me against the tree about which they had been at work. With a few rapid turns of a hair-lariat, that had been cut in pieces for the purpose, they made me as fast as though I had grown there, part of the trunk itself.

Up to the present moment I had not spoken, but I saw that if I were going to say anything, now was the time.

As they turned to depart, I asked, in as steady a voice as possible: "What was the meaning of this outrage? Why I had been thus stolen from my friends and tied up, probably to die of hunger?"

I was terribly in earnest, but the villains only laughed in my face.

I then threatened them with the wrath of my companions, and finally swore that my government would devastate their infernal country if I were not forthcoming, as I was a man of more importance than they probably were.

I wouldn't do. The rascal with the evil eye selected a level spot in front of where I stood, and nimbly performed several figures of a dance I had indulged in with the girl a few hours previous, and then, with a nod of the head, as much as to say, "You understand," and a satanic laugh, in which the other joined, they disappeared in the chaparral.

A moment later I heard the splash of paddles, and knew that I was alone.

But where was I? Was I near the town, or was I a long way off? Was it possible for my friends, if any of them were left, to get on my trail and release me from my perilous predicament?

The last hope I banished at once. I had come thither by water, and that, I knew, left no trail.

Things were beginning to look dark, and in more ways than one.

The heavy masses of clouds that had been scudding from the north-west all night, now began to "pack," and before long, the

moon and stars were shut in by a sable canopy, across whose surface an occasional gleam of lightning flashed; while, far away from whence the storm was coming, I heard the mutterings of thunder.

Tied to a tree all night was bad enough, but to be half-drowned in the bargain was "rough."

So I thought, for only to the night did I limit my imprisonment.

The hours passed slowly; it was but natural that they should. The storm burst, and the rain beat down upon me in torrents, at times nearly taking away my breath, or blinding me with its fury.

The "game" was fast being taken out of me when the gray dawn crept up in the east, but this welcome sight restored me to something like my ordinary self.

It grew lighter and lighter, and each moment I expected to hear the shouts of my friends, who would by this time be searching for me.

It still rained, or rather, poured, and, from appearances, was likely to do so for some time to come.

The *scash* of the river, the sough of the wind through the trees above my head, the steady dash of the rain as the hours drew slowly by, grew to be inconceivably monotonous.

My spirits again began to flag. Surely, if my companions were searching for me, they ought to have found me long ago.

Like a quick, sharp sting of a knife as it enters the flesh, the thought that perhaps none had survived that deadly fight shot across my brain.

I forced myself to consider the probable result if such had been the case.

There was but one conclusion. I must surely perish where I stood, for the villains who brought me to the place must have selected it with the knowledge that none were likely to pass that way.

I have "roughed" it a good deal; have faced, necessarily, a good many perils, and witnessed death in all possible forms; but I am free to say that, when these thoughts had passed rapidly through my mind, they left me weak and unmoved in view of the terrible fate that lay before me.

As the daylight had slowly dawned, so slowly did the hours pass away, and yet no succor came.

The storm had not abated one particle; on the contrary, the rain fell, if possible, with greater force, and while listening to its steady beat, as the shadows darkened, a new and strange sound—one that I had not before heard—fell upon my ear.

It was the sullen roar of water—of the river near at hand, that was swelling to overflow its banks.

Under such, or similar conditions, the mind is always quickened. It grasps facts and penetrates obscurities that, under ordinary circumstances, would pass unheeded.

As I looked and saw the yellow water creeping up through the chaparral, I knew, as well as though I had been told of the fact, that I was imprisoned upon the island that lay in mid-river just below the town.

I had heard the boys talk of it. It was subject to overflow, and I had been brought there to perish in the flood. With devilish ingenuity, my enemies had calculated or availed themselves of the time of the semi-annual freshet.

I can not describe the hours that passed. How I watched the waters rise, first wetting my feet, then climbing slowly up and up, until the waves dashed into my very face.

Or how I shouted for help, and tugged vainly at the tough thongs that so securely held me fast.

It was simply awful, this looking Death in the face as he slowly, inch by inch, came nearer and nearer to me.

Again I raised my voice to its utmost pitch, and this time, above the roar of the flood, I heard the shrill yelp of a dog, and then an answering shout.

That they were welcome sounds I need not say, and when, a little later, I heard the splash of paddles, I—so Curtis said—made the island "lively with my yowlin' an' cavortin'."

Well, I suppose I did, but then, who would not have done the same? For when Lamond and Curtis reached out to cut the thongs, and the latter went over and dived for those around my feet, the water was just washing my chin.

They told me how they had hunted for my body, never dreaming that I had come out of the fight alive, and had almost given me up, when the dog made his appearance, badly wounded, and by his strange actions had induced them to follow. He led them to a point opposite the island, and, rushing down to the edge, began barking violently.

At that moment they heard my shout, and at once securing a boat, came back to where the dog still stood, and crossed over.

"You see, my boy," said Jim Curtis, philosophically, "it won't do, now, to go ther them senoritas too hefty, fur ther sweet-hearts ar' allers around, an' they're meaner nor a black snake fur meanness."

Girls in India.—In India the heathen girls are not loved and taken care of as they are in America. Here, people let the little girls live and eat with father and mother and brothers, give them nice clothes to wear, and teach them to read and write; but in India the fathers are ashamed of the little girls, and never like to tell people that there are any little girls in their houses, and the fathers and brothers never let the mothers and sisters eat with them, or ride or walk with them anywhere. And heathen people do not let their girls learn to read, but try to keep them in ignorance. If a little girl belongs to the lower class, she is made to work very hard, like a little slave, while yet very small; and if she belongs to a high caste family, she is kept in her mother's private room after she is six or eight years of age, and never permitted to run out and play with other children, or go to visit uncles and aunts or grandpas.

When we ask the people to permit their girls to read, the poor people say, "We must have our girls to work, and if you teach them to read they will be good for nothing to work," or they will say, "Why should girls learn to read? If they learn to cook, it will be enough for them to know."

When we ask the high caste people to teach their girls to read, they also think it will do them no good, and they will not let their girls go out on the street where people can see them, to go to school. So when missionaries went to India, none of the girls learned to read.

Only ten years ago, in all the great district of Morababad, with a great many thousand people, there were no girls in school—not one. But when the missionaries went there their wives tried to teach the women and girls, and after a long time a few people

became willing to have their girls learn, if the women who were to teach them would come to their houses, so that they need not go out in the public street.

When a few commenced learning to read, others wanted to learn; and now in those places where the missionaries have taught the people, many women and girls are anxious to be taught. So now we want more teachers, and the little girls in America must try to earn and save some money to help to send some good lady teachers to teach those ignorant little girls in India.

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QUIET LODGINGS.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

I've journeyed far for several days,
I'm worn out and distressed,
I put up at a nice hotel,
To get some needed rest.
I'm shown up to my chamber straight,
And gladly go to bed at eight.
My lids close down into a doze;
I soon shall be asleep;
Farewell to all my weariness!
Welcome, oh, slumbers deep!
Somebody bangs this door of mine:
I wake; I hear the clock strike nine.
Again my eyes begin to droop
In spite of rumbling wheels,
And o'er my half-conscious mind
The mist of slumber steals.
Alarm bells ring; "Fire!" shriek the men;
I wake; I hear the clock strike ten.
Back on the road to sleep I go;
And I am almost there;
My neighbor in the right-hand room
Begins to snore and swear—
"By George, I've killed some twenty-seven!"
I wake; I hear the clock strike eleven.
Back into sleep, though something strange
Is nuzzling at my toes!
My neighbor in the left-hand room
Snore with tumultuous throes;
If he should burst his safety valve!
I wake; I hear the clock strike twelve.
Again in a half-doze I fall.
Two fellows overhead,
With broken-hearted violins,
Seem playing for the dead.
Who, could they hear it, would but groan.
I wake; I hear the clock strike one.
But when they stop for want of tunes,
My eyes reveal again.
A cavalry racket on the stairs,
By travelers from the train,
Pegging, and shaking the whole house through—
I wake; I hear the clock strike two.
At last I soundly get to sleep,
And feel quite glad at heart.
Some traveler is going off,
And wants an early start.
The porter by mistake wakes me
What time the clock is striking three.
Quite mad, I rise and dress myself,
And tell the landlady's crew
They woke the right man by mistake.
For I am going, too.
And to forget the night's events
I go and sleep across a fence.

The Puritan Lady.

AN INCIDENT OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR.

BY AGILE PENNE.

The royal army lay at Naseby. Cromwell's forces were advancing slowly with intent to give battle. Prince Rupert, the dashing cavalry leader, with a small force, held the town of Chester, a strong post right in the way of the line of march of the Roundhead army.

Our story is of the stormy time in England, when the Commons, rising in their might, essayed to wrest the royal power from the hands of a most unworthy monarch.

In a green and shady lane, close to the town of Chester, and a mile or so from it, walked two gay and dashing cavaliers.

From the fashion of their dress, their curled and perfumed locks, and their general appearance, one could easily have told that the two were officers of the royal army.

Holding high commands, too, for the taller of the cavaliers was Prince Rupert himself, and his companion, Percy, Lord of Arden.

In the ranks of the royal army rode no wilder gallants than the German prince and Arden's lord. Boon companions were they in tent and castle, in field and town—as bold soldiers as ever drew sword, as reckless rakes as ever sought a fair woman's smiles.

"Are we near the place?" questioned Arden, as they walked onward.

"Just beyond yonder town," answered Rupert.

"And she is fair, you say?"

"One of your English roses: a form, perfection itself; a face, beautiful as a painter's dream, rosy with health and radiant with smiles; eyes, blue as the sky above our heads; lips, the hue of the carnation flower."

"Faith! you grow strangely poetical over the charms of this unknown beauty!" cried Arden, laughing at his companion's enthusiasm.

"I have danced with the fairest demoiselles of the French Louis' court; flirted with the prettiest dames that claim kindred with our German landgraves, but never did my eyes fall upon a lovelier woman than this unknown English beauty."

"But, what is she; peasant or lady?"

"Oh, a lady, I'll dare be sworn! I am sure of it from her bearing, although she was but plainly attired. Why, my very meeting with her sounds like a romantic tale. I was passing through this green lane yesterday eve; just as I reached this spot, I heard a woman's scream, and the noise of hurrying footsteps. Drawing my rapier, and turning yon corner, I beheld a young girl fleeing in haste from a huge dog, whose foaming mouth and starting eyes told of madness. With a single thrust of my sword I dispatched the beast. The girl thanked me sweetly for the service, but declined the escort that I proffered. I was not to be baffled though; so I followed, discreetly, behind, and tracked the pretty maid to her abiding-place."

"But, is she maid, wife, or widow?"

"By the body of our most gracious king, I swear I know not," replied the Prince, lightly; "and, to tell the truth, my Lord of Arden, I care not."

"After that speech, who dares say that Prince Rupert is not the wildest blade that rides beneath the royal banner?"

The Prince laughed, but replied not.

"And now your plan of action?" asked Arden.

"That is what I do not know myself; time must develop it. All that I seek now is to catch another glimpse of the fair creature, who has cast such a spell upon me."

"Suppose she should be the daughter, sister, or, mayhap, wife of one of our Roundhead foes?"

"Who can tell?" cried Rupert, carelessly.

"And if she is, what a victory for her to insure the royal captain who holds the strongest post in all England that flaunts the royal banner!"

"Yes, and with deuced few men, too," said Rupert. "If King Charles expects me to hold the town, he must reinforce me ere long. I hear that Cromwell and his rabble are steadily advancing, as if with intent to give us battle."

"'Tis doubtless the intention of the crop-eared scoundrel," said Arden, who, like all his class, thoroughly despised the "brawler" captain, Cromwell. "But, do you intend to enter the house where dwells this unknown beauty?"

"Such is my intention; 'faint heart never won fair lady.' If the fortress refuses to yield at beat of drum, I'll e'en carry the citadel by storm."

The lane now turning, the two came in sight of the little cottage, nestled amid a bower of green.

"Yonder is the cot that holds the idol of my heart!" exclaimed the Prince.

"I'll return to the castle, unless I can be of some assistance to you in your wooing."

"First, I must ascertain who and what she is; it is necessary to learn the strength and position of the enemy before one can plan an attack."

"Right; success go with you," and Arden turned to retrace his steps.

Rupert walked boldly up to the door of the cottage, and knocked. The door was opened by a young girl, whose beauty fully justified the Prince's praise.

The girl started when she beheld Rupert's face.

"By the king!" quoth the cavalier, apparently in great surprise, "fortune favors me to-day. Seeking here a draught of water, I find the maiden, whom, but an hour ago, I mourned as lost to my sight forever!"

The girl blushed at the ardent gaze of the Prince.

"I can not refuse you what you ask, for it would be but a sorry return for the service you did me yesterday; yet, if you were to pass and forget that you have ever seen me, it would be, perhaps, better for us both," the maiden said, earnestly.

"Forget you!" exclaimed Rupert; "yes, when I forget the stars in heaven, or the sun that shines at noonday. But, if you say me nay, and deny my boon for a simple cup of water to slake my thirst, I will pass on and never more believe that gratitude for favor, done exists in the breast of woman-kind."

"Enter, if you will; I do not deny my obligation," replied the maiden, quickly, throwing open the door.

Rupert did not wait for a second invitation, but at once followed the girl into the house.

A dainty room it was he entered, worthy to be beauty's bower.

The girl brought a flask of wine, a drinking-cup of horn, and placed them before the cavalier.

"Lady," said Rupert, filling the cup, "I am a soldier, and have served in many lands, yet never in all my life have I seen a maid as fair as you."

The girl blushed at the praise.

"I can tell you," cried Katherine, freeing her head from the mantle. "You are caught in your own trap. By means of the password which you gave me, my husband and his Ironsides have surprised the town!"

"What is that?" questioned Rupert, in alarm.

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Right merrily Rupert hummed a French love-song to himself, as he retraced his way through the green and shaded lane.

Night came on. The royal sentries paced along their lines of watch, keeping vigilant guard, for report bespoke the near advance of the Puritan army.

In a sumptuously-furnished apartment in the castle sat the Prince. The richly-ornamented tapestries that adorned the walls told that it was a lady's bower; but now it served for the head-quarters of the royalist leader.

Rupert waited with feverish impatience. At last a soldier conducted a lady, closely cloaked and veiled, into the room, and then withdrew.

The new-comer removed the cloak and veil, and revealed the form and face of Katherine Langdon.

The eyes of the Prince sparkled with delight as he looked upon the pale face of the Puritan's wife.

"My husband," she murmured, averting her eyes from the face of the cavalier.

"Are you so anxious to behold him that you can not spare me a few moments of your time?" he asked, reproachfully.

"I am very anxious," she replied, lowly; there was a strange restraint in her manner.

"Do you love this crop-eared cur so much?" Rupert asked, contemptuously.

A single flash of fire came from the cast-down eyes of the Puritan lady. A flash that escaped the notice of the cavalier.

"I love him truly and deeply," she answered, slowly.

"My bonny Kate, I have deceived you," Rupert said, calmly. "Your husband is not a prisoner in my hands, but you are, and you shall remain here until you forget him and learn to love me."

With a sudden movement, Katherine rushed toward the door, as if with intent to escape, but a soldier barred the way, and, as she recoiled from him, cast a mantle over her head.

A second only was the lady in the hands of the soldier, for the quick report of firearms in the street below, followed by the shouts of the contending parties, made him pause.

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Hank kem in an' sed the red-skins wur about purty thick over on Stony Run, an' he thought as how they had planted thar village fur a reg'lar squab.

"Now thet wur bad, fur we knowed well enuff thet this range couldn't hold us both, an' one o' t'other wur bound to leave."

"'Twon't be me," sed Hank, "be cussed ef 'twit. It ar' too good a lay-out fur to give it up."

"I told Hank I didn't see how we war goin' to help it; but he sed he'd think the thing over, an' meby the Injuns 'd move sooner 'n they calkerlated on."

"I knowed in a minit thet the ole feller hed a idea, an' I let him work into it with-out 'esterin' him w' questions."

"For two or three days we lay mighty close, an' all the time Hank wur cuttin' an' fixin' a couple of b'ar-skins as we hed, an' by-em-by he sed as how he reckoned he had fixed it so es them Injuns would leave afore long."

"Thet night, arter I'd turned in, Hank slipped off in the bresh, an' I didn't see him no more till long arter midnight, when he kim in an' laid down 'thout sayin' a word."

"Next mornin' he tole me how he war goin' to work the Cheyennes, an' arter I see his dodge, an' the things he'd fixed up, I begun to believe that it mout be did."

"We laid by that day too, an' when night kem on we see it wur goin' to be jess thet we wanted. It warn't very dark, but thar wur a kind uv mist like as made every thing look es big 'g'in es 'twur, sure enuff."

"Well, we gethered up the traps an' put out to ards the valley whar the village war. Hank had been over, the night he went away from camp, an' got the lay uv the ground, so we hed no trouble in findin' the place es suited, which war on top uv the hill over-lookin' the village, an' which war clear uv timber on the slope."

"Every thing down in thar valley war quiet. Thar fires war burnin' an' a few uv the warriors an' squaws war movin' about, but most uv 'em war in the lodges."

"It didn't take Hank long to git reddy. Fust he put on a kind uv leggins hed made outen the b'ar-skin, an' arter that the body the b'ar, which had arms fixed into it, thet were longer 'n his rifle hyar, stickin' out on both sides, an' then a big Mexikin gourd, as we sumtimes toled our water in, which hed cut to look fur all the world jess like a whoppin' skull uv a dead man. Inside he stuck a bit uv a candle, an' then put the thing over his head."

"I dunno ef yur 'erstands the contrivance; but I tell yur, boyces, it did look turrible, an' no mistake, w' the light a-shinin' through them holes, thet great 'hairy lookin' beast, with its long arms, an' a tail ten foot long draggin' behind onto the ground."

"Now then, Joe," sez Hank, "I'm goin' down into thet village, an' if them red-skins hain't different from enny others as I knows uv, why they'll scoot outen this afore mornin'."

"Stay hyar, in the bresh, an' see the fun."

"All right, ole hoss," sez I.

"Well, hyar goes," sed Hank, an' w' thet he fetched the awfulest whoop thet ever I heard in my life, he started down the slope, slashing his long arms around, an' waggin' his burnin' head from side to side. Half-way down he sot off a big squib uv damp powder hed fixed, an' the light frum it showed the Injuns what kind uv lookin' beast it wur."

"Well, well, to see them red-skins! I swar I thought I die a larfin'."

"Sech a yowlin' an' screechin' an' 'tarin' around! An' all thet time Hank war movin' slowly right down onto 'em."

"But, right hyar, jess when we thought thet the game war all safe, thet thing war buised, an' then Hank war in a fix, shore enuff."

"It happened thet thar war a darned half-breed in the village as hed married one uv the chiefs' darters, an' es soon es he see the thing, he snatches up a war-club an' makes arter Hank, wus'n a bald hornet."

"I see thet, ef he reched him, the jig war up, an' so I up's with Hank's rifle, an' downs thet durned runnecake right in his tracks."

"Thet showed our game, an' the Injuns turned on my comrade, an' in less'n a minit they hed stripped off the b'ar-skin, buised the gourd, an' knocked him over the head w' a tommyhawk."

"While this wur goin' on, a lot uv the impus wur swarmin' up the hill, an' I see it wur time to lite out, which I did purty quick, I reckon."

"Skirrin' the further edge uv the ridge, I made across the kentry, headin' fur the high ground, whar thar war plenty uv good kiver, leaves, canyons, chappar